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ABSTRACT

Intended to assist institutions in understanding and preparing for evaluation by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC), this handbook compiles the commission's policies, procedures, and standards. Section 1 describes the DETC and its Accrediting Commission. Section 2 answers such questions as why become accredited, what accreditation is, what distance education is, and the benefits of accreditation. Section 3 describes Accrediting Commission members and staff, its powers and responsibilities, and communication with it. Section 4 focuses on the process of accreditation: which institutions are eligible, steps in the process, communications between Commission and institutions, right to appeal or reconsideration, review of duly-accredited institutions, obligations of accreditation, resignation of accreditation, and review of standards. Section 5 consists of questions and answers on accreditation. Section 6 is an introduction to standards, guides, policies, and rating forms. Section 7 lists the accreditation standards. Appendixes comprising the bulk of the handbook include the following: a guide to self-evaluation report and institutional summary profile; other guides to self-evaluation; special policies; rating forms; reports; DETC business standards; other forms, policies, procedures, questionnaires, and guidelines; fees; glossary; and DETC Accreditation Handbook update sheet. (YLB)

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Accreditation Handbook

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Policies, Procedures, and Standards of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council

DETC Accreditation Handbook

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The independent Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council (formerly the National Home Study Council) is listed by the United States Department of Education as a "nationally recognized accrediting agency." The Accrediting Commission is also a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education (CHEA). The U.S. Department of Education and CHEA recognition is for postsecondary program purposes only.

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Preface

What Distance Education Accreditation Means

For more than 70 years, the Distance Education and Training Council (formerly the National Home Study Council) has been the standard-setting agency for correspondence study and distance education institutions. The Council has progressively raised its standards. Its accrediting program employs procedures similar to those of other recognized educational accrediting agencies.

Each accredited institution must voluntarily meet the twelve standards for accreditation. An institution must:

- have reasonably attainable and clearly stated educational objectives;
- offer educationally sound and up-to-date courses;
- provide satisfactory educational services;
- offer adequate student services;
- have demonstrated ample student success and satisfaction;
- have a competent faculty;
- carefully screen students for admission;
- advertise its courses truthfully;
- be financially able to deliver high quality educational services;
- have fair and equitable tuition and refund policies;
- have adequate facility, equipment and record protection; and
- conduct continuous research and self-improvement studies.

To become accredited, each institution must have made an intensive study of its own operations, opened its doors to a thorough inspection by an outside examining committee, supplied all information required by the Accrediting Commission, and submitted its instructional materials for a thorough review by competent subject matter specialists. The process is repeated every five years.

The Accrediting Commission

The Accrediting Commission establishes educational and ethical business standards. It examines and evaluates distance education institutions in terms of these standards. It accredits those which meet the standards. The Commission is recognized to accredit private and non-private distance education institutions at the degree and non-degree levels. Its scope of accrediting requires a full institutional review and is based upon a method of education as opposed to grade levels, subject matter, or geographic location. In other words, DETC accreditation is an institutional and international source of accreditation for distance education schools.

Purpose of this Handbook

The Accrediting Commission has prepared this Handbook as a compilation of its policies, procedures, and standards. It is intended to assist institutions in understanding and preparing for evaluation by the Commission. Institutions should use it as they organize and conduct their self-evaluations, as they evaluate their readiness to meet the rigors inherent in voluntary accreditation, and as they work to maintain the standards of the Commission. This Handbook also provides an orientation for those participating in the accreditation process as evaluators. Finally, this Handbook offers guidance to newly-established distance education institutions seeking to build or refine their policies and practices, whether or not they apply for DETC accreditation.

Introduction

Accreditation in education began over a century ago. The movement started as a public reaction to the extreme differences between educational institutions which initially appeared to be similar. Accrediting bodies were voluntarily organized by educators to develop and implement common policies and standards to measure educational quality. From its inception, accreditation has been a non-governmental, completely voluntary peer group method of identifying educational institutions or programs which meet published standards of quality. A variety of regional and professional accrediting groups came into being in the early 1900s in response to the public's demand for reliable indicators of institutional quality.

The DETC and Its Accrediting Commission

The Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) was founded in 1926 under the name "National Home Study Council." As a voluntary association of correspondence schools, its purpose was, and still is today, "to promote sound educational standards and ethical business practices within the correspondence school field."

In 1952, the Council decided further improvements should be made in the procedures used to examine and approve distance study institutions for membership. A system of voluntary accreditation seemed to be the best solution. As the planning progressed, the Council was assisted by individuals in the then U.S. Office of Education, the National Commission on Accrediting, and other recognized accrediting agencies.

The Council's independent Accrediting Commission was officially established in 1955. Four years later, the Commission was listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a "nationally recognized accrediting agency" under the terms of Public Law.

Like other accrediting agencies, the Accrediting Commission is reviewed periodically by the U.S. Department of Education to make certain that it meets the criteria for federal recognition as published in Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Federal law does not discriminate against national accrediting bodies. Since 1959, the Accrediting Commission has been continuous recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, and its recognition was

last renewed in 1996. The procedures and standards of the Commission have been continuously refined and improved over the past four decades.

In 1973, the Accrediting Commission received the recognition of the National Commission on Accrediting, thus becoming the first agency accrediting private schools—at that time, most of them proprietary—to receive such recognition. In 1975, the Accrediting Commission became a charter member of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), a non-governmental body recognizing and coordinating the activities of accrediting agencies throughout the United States. In 1993, COPA was dissolved and the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA) was formed. DETC was also a charter member of that organization.

In 1994, the National Home Study Council changed its name to the Distance Education and Training Council. CORPA was dissolved on December 31, 1996 and its successor, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), was formed. Once again, DETC became a charter member of the new organization.

Today, the Accrediting Commission is recognized as the national institutional accrediting body for both private and non-private distance study institutions which offer non-degree programs and academic degree programs from Associate's through the Master's degree levels.

Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council is not a required element in enabling an institution of postsecondary education to establish eligibility to participate in any Higher Education Act (HEA) program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. DETC's scope of recognition **does not extend** to accreditation of institutions of postsecondary education to enable them to establish eligibility to participate in any HEA programs, i.e., Title IV federal student loans or Pell Grants.

Accreditation

Why Become Accredited?

What does accreditation mean to you, the administrator or faculty member of a distance education institution? An opportunity to improve the educational quality of your institution? A means of evaluating and comparing your courses, facilities, and procedures with those of others? A process whereby an association grants public recognition to an institution as having met certain standards?

Accreditation is **all** of these. However, the greatest value of accreditation is to be found in undergoing the process itself, a process of self-evaluation in which an institution voluntarily monitors and controls its own behavior to assure that its "programs and policies embody standards of good practice."

Historically and currently, accreditation may be said to:

- foster excellence in education through the development of standards for assessing educational effectiveness;
- encourage improvement through continuous self-evaluation and planning; and
- assure the educational community, students, state and federal authorities, the general public and other interested agencies or organizations that an institution has clearly defined and appropriate objectives; maintains conditions under which their achievement can be reasonably expected; appears in fact to be accomplishing them; and can be expected to continue to do so.

The word "accreditation" has acquired many shades of meaning over the years. Distance education accreditation is certification by a recognized body that a distance education institution has voluntarily undergone a comprehensive study and peer examination which has demonstrated that the institution does in fact meet the established standards. The institution must perform the functions that it claims: that it has set educational goals for students who enroll, has furnished materials and services that enable students to meet these stated goals, and can, in fact, show that graduates have benefited from the learning experiences provided.

DETC accreditation is founded on these philosophic principles:

- Accreditation is **purely voluntary**. The applicant institution voluntarily elects to apply for accreditation and it voluntarily agrees to comply with all standards.

- Accreditation is a **non-governmental** peer review process in which the integrity and good faith of an institution and its officers are essential.

- The burden of proof in demonstrating compliance with standards rests with the institution, **not** with the Accrediting Commission. The **institution must prove** to the Accrediting Commission that it meets or exceeds the standards.

- The Accrediting Commission considers information about an applicant institution **from any source** in reaching its conclusion.

- Accreditation is by its nature a formal, but nonetheless, **collegial process**. It works best when there is a common agreement that the chief purpose for seeking accreditation is the identification of soundness and quality in the practice of distance education.

What is Accreditation?

Distance study accreditation is an institution-wide source of nationally recognized accreditation which covers all distance study activities of the school. It is unique in American accreditation because it is based upon a method of delivering instruction rather than on geographical location, educational level, or subject matter discipline. It covers **all** programs, courses, and distance study endeavors of a school, including degree, non-degree, vocational, and avocational programs. Unlike regional or specialized accrediting agencies, the Accrediting Commission of the DETC provides distance study institutions with a single source of recognized accreditation.

What is Distance Education?

Distance education is education designed for students who live at a distance from the teaching institution. It is the enrollment and study with an educational institution which provides lesson materials for individual students. Presented in a sequential and logical order, the instruction is offered wholly or

primarily by distance study, usually through the mail, but also through telecommunications. Its predominant medium of instruction continues to be printed materials, although non-print media is becoming more popular. It may also incorporate or make use of video tapes, audio recordings, facsimiles, e-mail, telephone communications, and computers. When each lesson or segment is completed, the student mails or otherwise makes available to the school the assigned work for correction, grading, comment, and subject matter guidance by qualified instructors. Corrected assignments are returned to the student. This exchange fosters a personalized student-instructor relationship which is the hallmark of distance education instruction.

Originally, most distance education courses were vocational, but today there are academic, professional, avocational, and applied courses from kindergarten through the Master's degree level. There are, in addition, numerous specialized programs, such as those for blind persons and for parents of small children with hearing impairments. Distance education is available in practically any field, from accounting to zoology. Courses are offered in gemology, high school diploma, journalism, locksmithing, child day care management, yacht design, and many subjects not usually offered in resident schools.

Distance education courses also vary greatly in scope, level, and length. Some have a few assignments and require only a few months to complete, while others have a hundred or more lesson assignments requiring three or four years of conscientious study.

What are the Benefits of Accreditation?

For more than a century, DETC institutions have been the leaders in the field of distance education. Accreditation:

- provides a reliable indicator of school quality for counselors, employers, educators, governmental officials, and the public.
- is an expression of confidence in the educational program, the policies, and the procedures of the school by its peers—a lasting source of pride to the school.
- is an external source of stimulation to improve services, programs, and staff through periodic self-studies and evaluations by an outside agency.

- is an assurance of high standards and educational quality through the school's adherence to established criteria, policies, and standards.

- brings the school recognition through the extension of special status by several states under their legislation and regulations, as well as recognition given by federal, state, and local agencies in referring students to accredited schools.

- brings eligibility for the benefits and opportunities given to accredited schools by federal law. For example, **only accredited distance education institutions** are eligible to participate in the Montgomery G.I. Bill.

- allows an institution and it courses to be listed in the *DETC Directory of Accredited Institutions.*

- enables the institution to qualify to participate in the voluntary education tuition assistance program administered by the Defense Activity on Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) for each of the U.S. military services.

- permits a school to be listed in the directory, *Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education*, which is published annually by the American Council on Education.

- allows the use of the DETC seal and reference to accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council.

- allows students to qualify for tuition reimbursement under certain industry, corporate, or union-sponsored tuition assistance plans requiring enrollment with an accredited school.

- brings eligibility for participation in the academic credit evaluation procedure conducted by the American Council on Education's Project on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI).

- expedites acceptance of advertising by newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, and other advertising media.

- provides a unique professional development opportunity for school staff members to serve on accrediting examining committees visiting other schools.

The Accrediting Commission

Members of the Accrediting Commission

The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council is a duly constituted accrediting body which operates within the incorporated association of the DETC. The Commission has **complete autonomy** to make accrediting decisions. The Accrediting Commission has seven members and its makeup includes persons possessing either academic or administrative expertise or both. Four of the Commissioners are from outside the field and are considered in every sense to be representatives of the public, and three Commissioners are from the distance education field. All Commissioners are appointed by the DETC Board of Trustees.

School Commissioners: School Commissioners are from the distance education field and are CEO's of accredited distance education institutions. The three school Commissioners may serve no more than two, three-year terms each. The *DETC Constitution and Bylaws* of the Distance Education and Training Council provides: "Each Commissioner from the distance education field must be a **bona fide** executive officer of an accredited organization which does not have a person serving on the Accrediting Commission or the Board of Trustees."

Public Commissioners: The four Commissioners from outside the distance education field are selected for their overall interest in education and their competence in business, industry, education, government, and related fields. It is believed that the Accrediting Commission of the DETC is the **only** national recognized accrediting agency in the United States with a majority of public members. Public Commissioners may serve for a maximum of three, three-year terms. The DETC has been fortunate in being able to attract and retain for the maximum allowable terms exceptionally well-qualified individuals as Commissioners over the years.

Public Commissioners have been appointed to serve on the Commission because of the great interest they have demonstrated in the cause of high standards for institutions, their willingness to become involved and committed to the accrediting program for distance education their demonstrated objectivity and sound judgment, and the outstanding competencies they bring to the Commission from their respective backgrounds.

Officers of the Commission: The officers of the Commission are a Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Secretary. The Chair and Vice Chair are members of the Accrediting Commission elected to office by vote of the Commissioners. It is customary for a public Commissioner to serve as Commission Chair.

Current Members of the Accrediting Commission: The following individuals are the current members of the Accrediting Commission:

- Patrick M. Keller, *Chair*, Partner, Price Waterhouse*
- Isaiah L. McCloskey, *Vice Chair,* Chair of the Board, Learning and Evaluation Center
- William B. Cottingham, President Emeritus, GMI Engineering & Management Institute*
- William H. Hunding, President, American School
- Mary L. Pankowski, Vice President for the North Campus and University Outreach, Florida International University*
- Henry A. Spille, Vice President, American Council on Education (Retired)*
- Thomas R. Stuart, President, Art Instruction Schools

* Public Commissioners

The Staff

Equally valuable in this process is the Commission's staff, which assists the Commission in carrying out its mission. The staff provides counsel to applicants seeking accreditation, training for members of the Examining Committees, and continuous communication with states, including the U.S. Department of Education and other relevant agencies. Accrediting Commission staff members serve as observers on Examining Committees; appoint Examining committee members; arrange logistics for visits and Commission meetings; and serve as the central communications link between the public, applicants, other accrediting associations, and the Accrediting Commission.

The Executive Secretary is the day-to-day administrator of the Commission and the staff, and he manages and supervises the accreditation process. The Executive Secretary is responsible for liaison between and among the Commissioners, the Examining Committees, and the institutions participating in the accrediting process.

Current Staff Members: The current staff members are:

- Michael P. Lambert, Executive Secretary
- Sally R. Welch, Assistant Secretary
- Susan M. Reilly, Accrediting Coordinator

Powers and Responsibilities of the Commission

The powers and responsibilities of the Commission are to:

- establish and promulgate criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of distance education and independent learning organizations;
- establish its operating budget and provide for a schedule of reasonable fees which will assure the financial stability of the Commission;
- receive applications from institutions desiring accreditation;
- appoint qualified evaluators and provide for a comprehensive evaluation procedure;
- review the Chair's reports and all other pertinent material and accredit or withhold accreditation from applicant institutions. The decisions of the Commission are not subject to review or change by the membership of the DETC or the Council's Board of Trustees;
- issue a directory of accredited organizations *(DETC Directory of Accredited Institutions)* in which institutions will be identified in a manner which indicate their course offerings;
- make available to the public current information covering the criteria for accreditation and the operation of the Commission;
- re-evaluate at reasonable intervals the accredited organizations' programs, organization, and courses of study; and
- exercise such other powers as are necessary to carry out the function of a reputable, nationally recognized accrediting association.

Communicating with the Commission

Individuals seeking further information about the Accrediting Commission, you may consult:

- in person, by appointment
- by mail to: DETC, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529
- by telephone at (202) 234-5100
- by fax at (202) 332-1386*
- by e-mail at detc@detc.org*
- by viewing DETC's home page at "http://www.detc.org"

* It is the Commission's policy that fax and e-mail communications of a significant nature should be confirmed by submission of the original, signed document.

The Process of Accreditation

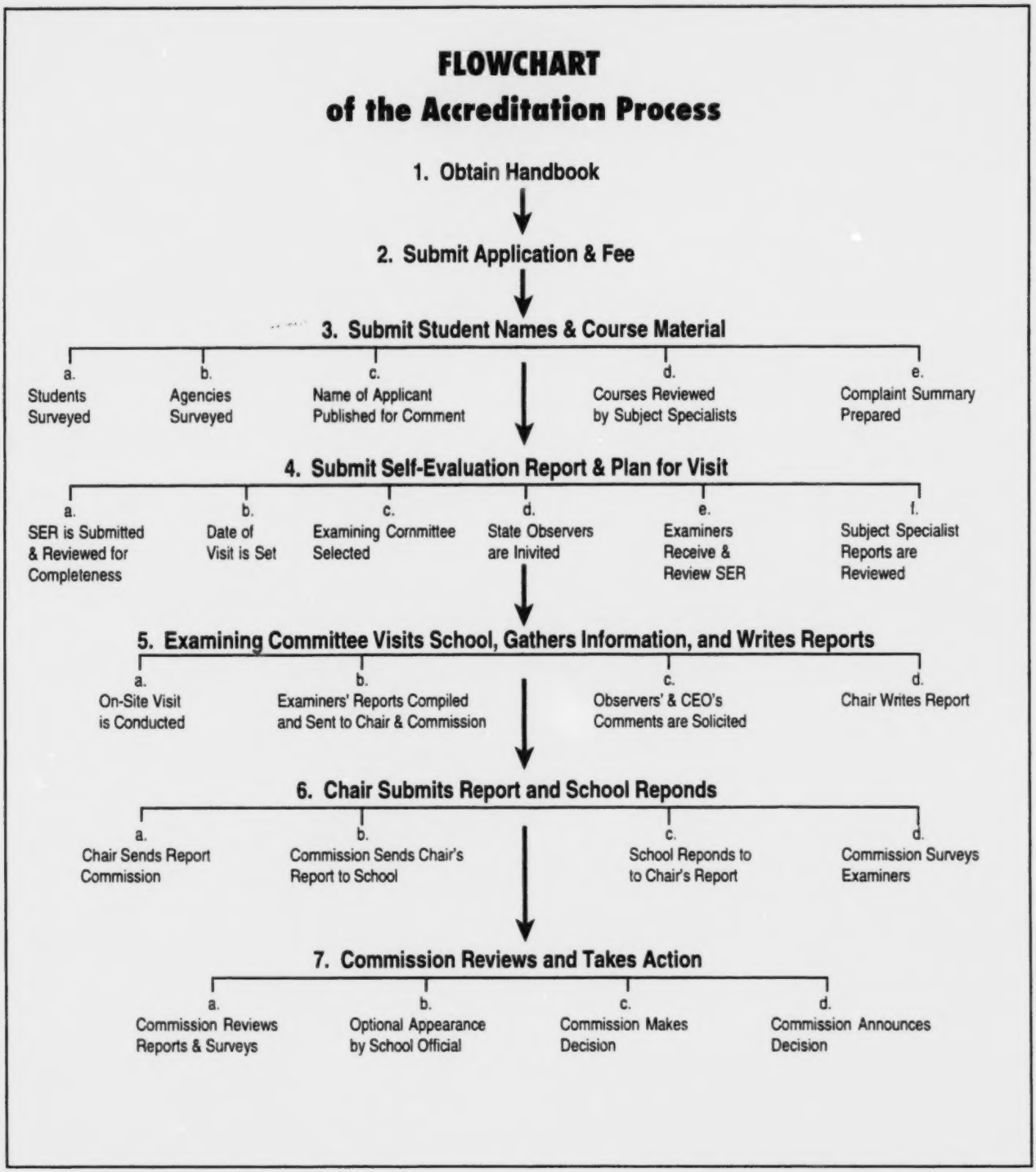
Which Institutions are Eligible?

The Accrediting Commission is aided in making its decisions by the extensive staff work done before a Commission meeting. The process of accreditation begins when an institution submits its application to the Commission's Washington, D.C. office. Here a determination is made of the institution's eligibility on two key points: (1) whether it has been in actual operation as a distance education institution for a period of at least two continuous years immediately prior to the date of its application for accreditation (the two-year period begins with the date of the first student enrollment); and (2) whether the applicant is in fact a "**bona fide** distance education institution," defined by the Accrediting Commission as an educational institution which:

- formally enrolls students and maintains student records;
- retains a qualified faculty to service students;
- transmits to students organized instructional materials;
- provides continuous two-way communication on student work, e.g., evaluating students' examinations, projects, or answering queries, with prompt feedback given to students;
- offers courses of instruction which must be studied **predominantly at a distance** from the institution; and
- is properly licensed, authorized or approved by the applicable state educational institutional authority.

The Accrediting Commission does not accept applications from distance education institutions which offer academic degree programs **beyond** the Master's degree level.

The Commission must also be assured that the courses and programs of the school are within the capability of the Commission to examine and evaluate. The Accrediting Commission reserves the right to limit the scope of its review to the kinds of institutions and types of programs for which it feels adequate standards have been developed and for which it has the competence to review.


FLOWCHART
of the Accreditation Process
1. Obtain Handbook
2. Submit Application & Fee
3. Submit Student Names & Course Material
a. Students Surveyed
b. Agencies Surveyed
c. Name of Applicant Published for Comment
d. Courses Reviewed by Subject Specialists
e. Complaint Summary Prepared
4. Submit Self-Evaluation Report & Plan for Visit
a. SER is Submitted & Reviewed for Completeness
b. Date of Visit is Set
c. Examining Committee Selected
d. State Observers are Inivited
e. Examiners Receive & Review SER
f. Subject Specialist Reports are Reviewed
5. Examining Committee Visits School, Gathers Information, and Writes Reports
a. On-Site Visit is Conducted
b. Examiners' Reports Compiled and Sent to Chair & Commission
c. Observers' & CEO's Comments are Solicited
d. Chair Writes Report
6. Chair Submits Report and School Reponds
a. Chair Sends Report Commission
b. Commission Sends Chair's Report to School
c. School Reponds to to Chair's Report
d. Commission Surveys Examiners
7. Commission Reviews and Takes Action
a. Commission Reviews Reports & Surveys
b. Optional Appearance by School Official
c. Commission Makes Decision
d. Commission Announces Decision

The Commission also requires that **all** courses, programs, divisions, and affiliates of the ownership undergo the accreditation process. The failure of one program or division to apply for or achieve accreditation renders **all divisions** ineligible for accreditation.

Steps in the Accreditation Process

Since accreditation is a voluntary process, each institution must make its own choice: to seek accreditation or re-accreditation or not. Schools desiring accredited status are expected to take the initiative in going through a series of steps outlined below. Institutions seeking accreditation or re-accreditation assume the burden of proof in presenting themselves as meeting the established standards. The steps in the accreditation process are:

1. Obtain the *DETC Accreditation Handbook.*

The Accrediting Commission's comprehensive publication on accreditation is currently sold for $20 (U.S.). For institutions undergoing the five year re-accreditation process, information will be sent to them in August of the preceding year advising them of their upcoming re-accreditation review. Once the institution has received the *DETC Accreditation Handbook,* the senior staff should study it carefully. This book answers most questions about the accrediting process. If the school staff has questions about the review process, then they should contact the Commission's staff in Washington, D.C.

2. Submit Application for Accreditation and Fee.

To initiate the accreditation process, the application for accreditation (found in Appendix G.1), and a $300 application fee, must be submitted to the Commission. The Accrediting Commission accepts applications from institutions that have been operating as **bona fide** distance education school (see definition on page 17) and enrolling students for at least **two** years. Upon receipt of the application and fee, Commission staff will consult with the institution as needed. Receiving the Application begins the formal process that is required to bring about a total analysis and evaluation of the institution, its policies, procedures, philosophies, objectives, functions, and accomplishments.

3. Submit Student Names and Course Material.

a. Students Surveyed: The names and addresses of the **first 100 students** consecutively enrolled with the institution beginning on the **first day of the 18th month preceding the date of the application** must be submitted on self-adhesive mailing labels. Insofar as possible, the number of students must reflect the same proportion of the enrollments for each of the institution's major course offerings. For example, if you have 100 students enrolled in two separate courses, then approximately one-half of the students on the mailing labels should be from each respective course.

These students are asked to complete a survey form (see Appendix J. 1) which contains questions about enrollment practices, lessons, student services, and student satisfaction with the course(s) and the institution. A self-addressed stamped envelope is mailed with the survey to encourage the student to return the survey to the Commission.

b. Agencies Surveyed: In addition, the Commission staff also surveys Better Business Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, various consumer protection agencies, accrediting associations, and federal and state regulatory agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Education, for information on the educational services, business ethics, and general reputation of **all** applicant institutions.

c. Name of Applicant Published for Public Comment: The name of the institution applying for initial accreditation or re-accreditation is published in DETC publications (*DETC News, DETC Bulletin, Washington Memo*, etc.), and the public is requested to send any comments they may have to the Accrediting Commission by a given date.

d. Courses Reviewed by Subject Specialist: Course materials also are required to be submitted as part of the accreditation process. A new applicant for accreditation must submit **two** complete sets of each distance education or correspondence course. A school undergoing a re-accreditation examination must submit **one** complete set of all course materials. This includes advertising, an institution catalog, enrollment agreement(s), examinations and examination solutions, and all tools, kits, and equipment provided with the course(s) (see Appendix C. 5).

Subject matter experts, who are also called "subject specialists," are selected to review and report on the school's course materials (see Appendix J. 4). Typically, these reviews take place in the subject specialists' home or office. However, if an institution offers a combination distance study-resident program, offers a degree program, or has an extremely large number of courses (e.g., a military institute), then one or more subject specialists are appointed to visit the institution for an on-site review of course materials. Course materials submitted as part of an institution's application for accreditation **are not returned to the school**; they are consumed in the review process. Each subject specialist submits to the Accrediting Commission a written report on the course reviewed (see Appendices D. 2, D. 4, and D. 5).

e. Complaint Summary is Prepared: The Accrediting Commission has a formal complaint procedure for handling complaints lodged against an accredited institution (see Appendix H. 3). A summary of any complaints received on an institution that is undergoing re-accreditation is compiled and the summary is presented at the executive breakfast meeting on the day of the on-site visit (see Step 5 on page 25).

4. Submit the Self-Evaluation Report and Plan Visit.

a. SER is Submitted and Reviewed for Completion: Each applicant institution must study itself and submit a Self-Evaluation Report, which is referred to as an "SER." The SER is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the "Guides to Self-Evaluation" found in Appendix A. Prior to starting its self-evaluation, an institution may want to arrange a preliminary conference with the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission. Such a meeting will be scheduled if possible. The meeting may be useful in: (1) developing further understanding of the accrediting process, purposes, and procedures; (2) planning operational studies; and (3) discussing the kinds of data needed for the SER.

Once the SER is received by the Accrediting Commission, the Commission staff reads it to make certain it is complete and all appropriate materials are included. If material is missing, staff will call the institution and request that the missing information be sent to the Commission right away.

The SER provides data on all areas of a school's operation, history, course offerings, student services, finances, etc., along with supporting documen-

tation. The self-evaluation includes as wide a gathering and analysis of pertinent data on all aspects of the school and its work. It should, above all else, be a **truly self-analytical document** that identifies the particular strengths and weaknesses of the institution. It should reveal the philosophy, organization, specific practices and procedures (documented wherever possible), the success of different operations, and the outcomes of the educational process including the degree to which the school is accomplishing its stated objectives. Data should not be amassed routinely, but in a constant search for new meanings, new methods and procedures, new hypotheses, and new ideas for improvement. The Self-Evaluation Report really "tells a story" about the school. What the Accrediting Commission is looking for is a **candid self-analysis** of the institution.

Preparing the Self-Evaluation Report may take only a few months for a small institution, to as many as 9 months for a large school. Schools are instructed to allow sufficient time for writing, editing, and revising the Self-Evaluation Report. **This is a key document in the institution's quest for accreditation!**

It is recommended that as many staff as possible get involved in the preparation of the SER. Preparing the SER is a great learning experience for everyone. Usually, a school will submit 10 copies of the SER. However, larger institutions will be asked to submit as many as twenty copies.

b. Date of Visit is Set: A mutually convenient on-site examination date is coordinated with the institution. On-site visits are from one to two days, depending upon the size of the institution. Over the years it has been found that, for most institutions, a one-day visit provides ample time for a thorough examination. This is due primarily to the nature of distance education institutions—centralized staff, offices and records—as well as the fact that classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, a student body, or athletic facilities are not involved. Larger institutions and institutions with multiple locations generally require more than a one-day visit. In cases where resident training is provided as a required or an optional part of a distance education course, the training facilities are examined to make sure that outcomes of resident training contribute to the total course objectives. Guidelines for preparing for an on-site visit are found in Appendix J. 7.

c. Examining Committee is Selected: The Examining Committee is not limited in size, but usually includes a Chair, an educational standards

examiner, a business standards examiner, subject specialists for each course area (who may or may not visit the institution), and an observer for the Accrediting Commission (see "The Organization of the Examining Committee" on page 24). An Examining Committee is appointed to visit the school for the purpose of verifying the information in the Self-Evaluation Report, and to gather additional facts for the Accrediting Commission (see Appendix J. 2). Once the examiners are selected, their names are submitted to the institution. The institution may object, with an adequate reason, to a specific examiner and request that another examiner be chosen.

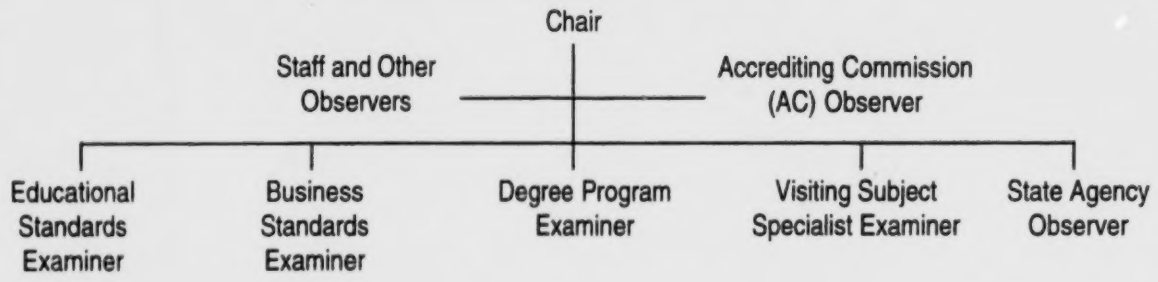
Examiners, who are also called evaluators, are selected from among educators, executives, and practitioners in business, technical, and service fields (see Appendix J. 3). To become a **qualified examiner**, one must complete the "Training Seminar for Accrediting Commission Evaluators" (usually held once a year in conjunction with a DETC Workshop) and/or complete the distance education course entitled "DETC Evaluator Training Program" and receive a certificate of completion. One must **also** serve as an "Examiner in Training" on at least one on-site visit. The Commission develops and maintains a record of the qualifications of people who have been trained as examiners. The Commission strongly stresses to each examiner the need for confidentiality before, during, and after the on-site visit (see Appendix J. 5).

d. State Observers are Invited: Representatives from state licensing bodies and from federal agencies are notified of forthcoming visits and are invited to participate as observers in the process. They are encouraged (but not required) to submit written reports to the Chair at the conclusion of the visit.

e. Examiners Receive and Review SER: A copy of the SER is sent to each member of the visiting Examining Committee prior to the on-site visit to the institution. When special examinations are ordered, SERs are also required before the on-site visits (see Appendix B. 8). While on-site visits are required for all institutions seeking accreditation or re-accreditation, they may or may not be required for institutions submitting progress reports.

When ever possible, the SER is sent to each examiner one month prior to the on-site visit. Each examiner reads the SER carefully and uses the "Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions" (see Appendix D. 1) to consider the institution's responses to each question. The examiners make notes of any questions not answered in the SER or areas in which they may have concerns. The examiners use their notes to form their list of questions to be asked or items to be checked at the on-site visit. The examiners are not limited to the questions on the rating form, and are encouraged to ask their own questions.

The Organization of the Examining Committee



Functions of the Examining Committee Members

All Committee Members

- verify information in SER
- evaluate school using standards and rating forms
- submit reports to the Executive Secretary

Chair

- coordinates visit
- assures examiners complete their tasks during visit
- sets date for submission of reports
- prepares Chair's report and submits it to the Executive Secretary

Educational Standards Examiner

- evaluates school using standards and rating forms
- submits report to Chair and Executive Secretary
- verifies special areas
  - **bona fide** distance education
  - two years of operation
  - course ownership or rights
  - non-visiting subject
- handles special concerns
  - reviews student surveys
  - reviews complaints

Degree Program Examiner

- evaulates school using standards and rating forms
- submits report to Chair and Executive Secretary
- handles special concerns
  - reviews degree curriculum & courses
  - interviews faculty

Business Standards Examiner

- evaluates school using standards and rating forms
- submits report to Chair and Executive Secretary
- verifies special areas:
  - two years of operation
  - legal operation

Visiting Subject Specialists

- review courses on site
- evaluate school using standards and rating forms
- submit reports to Chair and Executive Secretary
- evaluate special areas:
  - facilities
  - existence and condition of equipment
- interviews:
  - faculty
  - students

AC Observer

- assures AC procedures are followed

Staff Member

- coordinates schedules and logistics

State Agency Observer

- participates as a full member of the committee
- provides pertinent information from state files
- observes school examination and process
- files comments to Commission (optional)

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f. Subject Specialist Reports are Reviewed: The examiners are also sent any subject specialists reports that have been received by the Commission. They review these reports for content and comments which they may decide to include in their reports.

5. Examining Committee Visits School, Gathers Information and Writes Reports

During the visit, the questions asked by the examiners and the methods of inquiry help safeguard impartial judgment. Each examiner develops a comprehensive picture of the institution's operations before the visit by doing a thorough review and study of the SER. Information provided in the report is verified at the time of the visit. The Examiner's Rating Form directs Examining Committee members in their inquiries. Also, the presence of an Accrediting Commission observer helps ensure objectivity, impartiality, uniformity, and adherence to established procedures.

At the time of the on-site visit, **it is vital that all key staff members are present or available,** including faculty, principal managers, outside accountants and instructors. Members of the Examining Committee will want to interview many of the key staff members during the on-site visit.

a. On-Site Visit is Conducted: The following briefly describes the procedures for the on-site examination:

- **Executive Breakfast Meeting:** Prior to arrival at the institution, the Committee members meet at an executive breakfast meeting which is usually held in a restaurant in the hotel where the examiners are staying. The group discusses and reviews the SER, subject specialists' reports, any student complaints, any complaints received from the public, and any student surveys received. During this meeting, the Committee develops a schedule of activities for the day. Specific responsibilities of the Committee members and Accrediting Commission policies are reviewed by the Chair (see Appendices J. 2, J. 3, and J. 5).

- **Tour of Institution:** Upon arrival at the institution, the Committee meets with the head of the institution and others on the faculty and administrative staff. The purposes of this meeting are to provide for mutual acquaintances, to agree upon a schedule and plan of procedure, to have the CEO state the institution's philosophy and purpose, and to describe the institution's organization and office layout. The Committee

members are shown to a private room which will serve as their "headquarters" while on the visit. A brief tour of the facilities is conducted. The Committee members note where key officials or staff are located so that they may interview them later. The Committee members are trained **not** ask questions during the tour.

- **Examiners Interview Staff:** The Committee members then visit various departments to conduct interviews with school staff members. Each Committee member works in his or her own area of expertise during the examination and meets with the entire Examining Committee periodically during the review (see "Functions of the Examining Committee Members" on page 24). For example, the Educational Standards Examiner reviews student surveys and complaints, and verifies the two years of operation as a **bona fide** distance education school. Committee members may work alone or together depending upon the size and complexity of the institution. Most interviewing is conducted using one-on-one interviews. However, in larger institutions a Committee member may meet with small groups of officials. Committee members work from the documents, take notes, examine files, review records, verify data, and assemble relevant information to aid in preparing their individual reports. Committee members may also want to interview instructors and/or students by telephone while at the institution.

- **Working Luncheon:** A working, "executive session" lunch for the Committee members is arranged at the halfway point of the visit to afford examiners an opportunity to consolidate their notes, assess their progress, and discuss among themselves any changes in the visitation schedule which appear to be necessary. The lunch is made available in the Committee's meeting room and is provided by the institution.

- **Summary Meeting:** After the interviews are finished, the Committee meets back at their headquarters at the end of the visit to consolidate notes and to assure that all areas have been reviewed and the appropriate people interviewed. They also agree upon a time schedule for submitting individual Committee member reports to the Chair. Generally, reports are submitted to the Chair within a two to three week time frame.

- **Exit:** There is **no** "exit interview" with the CEO of the institution. The visit ends with a brief conference between the Chair and the CEO. The Chair may ask for further information which the Committee will need for its report and informs the CEO of an approximate date when he or

she may expect to receive a copy of the Chair's report. The Chair thanks the CEO for the cooperation and hospitality received. Because this meeting takes place **before** the examiners have had an opportunity to reflect on all information gained and conditions observed and **before** they have had time to prepare their reports, the Chair does **not** discuss the findings of the Committee. Because judgment regarding accreditation rests **solely** with the Accrediting Commission, neither the Chair nor any member of the Committee is authorized to say anything that implies acceptance or rejection of the institution by the Commission. The fact that the institution knows it will be receiving a written report of Committee findings prior to Commission action mitigates any need for an "exit interview" or need for Committee members to indicate "how they feel" about the institution.

b. Examiners' Reports Compiled and Sent to Chair: Each examiner completes the appropriate sections of the "Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions" and transfers his or her ratings to the "Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form" (see Appendix D. 1), along with his or her narrative commentary expanding on or explaining any "No" ratings. The "Summary Rating Form" and comments are sent to the Committee Chair. Once again, the examiners are not limited by the questions on the rating form. They are encouraged to explore any related characteristics and activities which help to determine if the institution meets each of the twelve Standards for Accreditation.

c. Observers' and CEO's Comments are Solicited: Any observers/ representatives from state licensing bodies and/or federal agencies are strongly encourage to send their comments to the Commission and the Chair. Their comments should address any issues concerning the institution's compliance with state or federal regulations or the accrediting process itself. The CEO's comments are solicited immediately following the on-site visit and prior to the receipt of the Chair's Report.

d. Chair Writes Report: Once the Chair receives all of the examiner reports, the Chair then prepares a Chair's Report. The purpose of the Report is to present to the Accrediting Commission a thorough, succinct, and accurate statement of the findings of the Examining Committee. It presents a composite view of the findings of Committee members and subject specialists on the policies, conditions, and practices of the institution as measured against the published standards for accredited institu-

tions. The Guide provided to the Committee Chair for preparation of the Chair's Report may be found in Appendix E.

In the Report, the strengths and the deficiencies of the institution are noted. The Report lists Committee findings and presents Committee recommendations on how an institution might take action to bring existing policies, practices, materials, or services into accord with specific standards. The Chair's Report does not, however, make any recommendation to the Accrediting Commission as to the overall approval or disapproval of the institution's application for accreditation.

6. Chair Submits Report and School Responds.

a. Chair Sends Report to Commission: The Chair's Report is sent by the Chair to the Executive Secretary of the Commission. The Executive Secretary does not edit or make changes to the Chair's Report.

b. Commission Sends Chair's Report to School: A copy of the Chair's Report is forwarded to the CEO of the applicant institution by the Executive Secretary for comment and response before the Accrediting Commission takes action. This procedure provides the institution with the opportunity to respond to Committee findings as well as to report on any corrective actions taken subsequent to the visit.

c. School Responds to Chair's Report: The institution has 14 days from the receipt of the Report to comment on the Report and to submit additional written materials which it desires to place before the Accrediting Commission.

d. Commission Surveys Examiners: After the on-site visit, the Commission surveys the examiners for any comments they may have on the institution's SER, the on-site visit, and the accreditation process (see Appendix J. 6).

7. Accrediting Commission Reviews and Takes Action.

The Accrediting Commission usually meets twice a year, in January and in June, to take action on schools' applications for accreditation. At each meeting, the Commission reviews information and documentation on the various applications for accreditation or re-accreditation.

a. Commission Reviews Reports and Surveys: The Commission looks at the Chair's Report; the school's response to the Chair's Report; subject specialists' reports; student surveys; any complaints from the public; information gathered from Better Business Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, consumer agencies, accrediting associations, and federal and state regulatory agencies; any responses to the public notices; school's advertisements and catalog; any communications between the school and the Accrediting Commission; and other relevant documentation from various sources.

b. Optional Appearance by School Official: The institution is also given an opportunity to make an oral presentation to the Accrediting Commission at the meeting at which the institution is considered. The oral presentation must be based on the Report and the written materials which the institution has submitted. If the institution desires to make an oral presentation, it must make a request to do so not less than 10 days prior to the date of the Commission meeting. The institution, at its option and its expense, may have its legal counsel present and may request a transcript of its oral presentation.

c. Commission Makes Decision: The Commission can take one of four courses of action:

1. accredit a new applicant institution, or continue an institution's accredited status;

2. accredit, or continue accreditation, with stipulations which a school must agree to meet within a period not to exceed a maximum of 12 months.

3. defer a decision pending receipt of a Progress Report, or submission of additional information; or,

4. deny accreditation to an applicant, or withdraw accreditation from an accredited institution.

If accreditation is denied or withdrawn, the Commission sends the institution a statement of the reasons for denial and the institution may appeal or request reconsideration of the decision of the Commission (see Appendices H. 1 and G. 5). The Commission will hear the appeal at the earliest practical time (see "Right to Appeal or Reconsideration" below). If an

institution is denied accreditation or if accreditation is withdrawn, the institution must wait one year from the date of the Commission's decision before making application for accreditation again.

All judgments of the Accrediting Commission are final. They are not subject to review or veto by DETC members, officers, or Board of Trustees.

d. Commission Announces Decision: After a final decision is made, the Accrediting Commission notifies other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and state agencies about accreditation status of an institution and any adverse actions it has taken. Announcements of accreditation or reaccreditation are made in DETC publications (*DETC News, DETC Bulletin, Washington Memo*, etc.) Letters are also sent to appropriate state and federal agencies. After the final decision is announced, the Commission purges its files and keeps only the reports and information necessary (see Appendix H. 4).

Communications Between Commission and the Institution

The Accrediting Commission accepts fax (telephone facsimile) and e-mail messages **for information only.** Fax and e-mail communications must be confirmed by the receipt of original, signed documents. Any decisions made or actions taken based on unconfirmed fax or e-mail communications are **not** final and are subject to reconsideration.

Right to Appeal or Reconsideration

The institution may appeal or have a reconsideration of an action of the Commission to deny or terminate accreditation. A statement of the procedure for appeals or reconsideration may be found in Appendix H. 1, entitled "Advising the Institution of Commission Decisions." A request for the "reconsideration" alternative involves a hearing before the Accrediting Commission itself. A request for the "appeal" alternative includes a hearing before an independent three member appeals panel. The "Application for Appeal or Reconsideration" is found in Appendix G. 5.

Sharing Information with Other Agencies

The Accrediting Commission routinely notifies other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and state and federal agencies about the status of an institution and any adverse actions.

Review of Dually-Accredited Institutions

The Accrediting Commission will promptly review the accreditation of an institution that is dually accredited, upon notification that another recognized institutional accrediting agency has taken an adverse action with respect to the institution or placed the institution on public probationary status, or if a recognized programmatic accrediting agency has taken an adverse action for reasons associated with the overall institution rather than the specific program against a program offered by an institution or placed a program on public probation. The Accrediting Commission will determine if it should also take any action against the institution.

Decisions of Other Agencies

The Accrediting Commission will not accredit or re-accredit an institution that is subject to a threatened action, an interim action or an action take by another recognized institutional accrediting agency, whereby the end result could or has lead to the institution being put on public probationary status, or whereby their accreditation or pre-accreditation status is revoked.

The Accrediting Commission will not accredit or re-accredit an institution that is the subject to a threatened action, an interim action or an action taken by a state agency whereby the end result could or has lead to suspension, revocation, or termination of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary accreditation.

Obligations of Accreditation

Accreditation brings with it a number of obligations for the institution. An accredited institution must continue to meet all Accreditation and Business Standards, and it must continually strive to improve itself. Having been recognized by the Commission, the institution must continue to justify the confi-

dence placed in it and modify itself in areas which may have been identified as weak. Accredited institutions are obligated to:

• **Become a Member of DETC:** Having attained accreditation, an institution automatically becomes a member of the Distance Education and Training Council. Membership in the Council entitles institutions to receive various publications of the DETC, to vote at annual meetings and to use the counsel and assistance of the DETC staff. Members are urged to attend annual meetings and become full participants in Council activities. They are expected to attend and become involved in the many workshops and special sessions designed for their professional growth and that of their staffs. Members are also urged to have representatives serve on many of the Council's committees.

• **File an Annual Report:** Each accredited institution is required to file an Annual Report to the Accrediting Commission. An updated Annual Report form (see Appendix G. 2) is sent to each institution in January to report on previous year's activities. The institution also has the **continuing obligation** to advise the Commission of significant changes to what it had originally represented upon its initial accreditation or re-accreditation. In certain situations the Accrediting Commission may request an institution to submit a financial statement (see Appendix H. 2). The financial statement should cover the activities of the legal entity which has the responsibility for operating the school.

• **Pay Annual Dues and Accreditation Fees:** An accredited institution is charged an annual Accreditation Fee to help sustain the accreditation process (see Appendix I. 1). And, as a member of DETC, each member institution is charged annual Dues (see Appendix I. 2). These Dues support the research and professional activities of the Council. The Dues and Fees are based on annual tuition receipts. An updated "Computation for Dues and Fees" form (see Appendix I. 3) is sent to the institution early in the year. The proper amounts are recorded and the form is returned to the DETC office. The DETC staff figures the amount of Dues and Fees owed by the institution. A statement is sent to the institution indicating the amount of Dues and Accreditation Fees owed. Dues and Fees not paid in full by April 30th are charged a late fee. Accredited institutions failing to meet their financial obligations to the Accrediting Commission and the Council by the end of the fifth month of DETC's fiscal year (August 31st) will be directed to undergo a special accrediting review if the obligations are not met by the end of the sixth month (September 30th).

• **Update Teach-Out Commitment:** The institution should also be mindful of its formal commitment to "teach out" all students who enroll in its distance study programs irrespective of changes in the institution's accreditation status (see Appendices G. 3 and G. 4). The institution should make certain that they have an up-to-date Teach-Out Commitment form on file with the Commission.

• **Correct any Incorrect or Misleading Information:** An accredited institution is required to issue public correction to all incorrect or misleading information knowingly or unknowingly released in reference to its accreditation status, the contents of reports of the examining committee from accreditation-related visits, and/or any actions taken by the Accrediting Commission with respect to the institution.

• **Advise Commission and/or Council:** An accredited institution must promptly inform the Commission of any actions it plans to take itself or actions taken against it by other agencies if those actions could affect its good status in the eyes of the Commission or the public, and resolve complaints in a forthright, prompt, amicable and equitable manner. Members should make periodic contact with the officers and staff of the Council apprising them of governmental and media actions which may affect their institutions or the Council. An accredited institution should also keep the Commission informed on any changes in mission, objectives or marketing approach (see Appendices B. 1 and C. 2); ownership (see Appendices B. 2 and C. 3); location (see Appendices B. 3 and C. 4); courses (see Appendix C. 5) combination distance study-resident programs (see Appendices B. 4 and C. 6); new training sites (see Appendix C. 8); and degree programs (see Appendices B. 5 and C. 9).

• **Participate in Evaluations:** One way the institution can continue to learn, improve, and also contribute to the DETC is by **actively participating** in the evaluation of other institutions which are being considered for accreditation. Training sessions in which school officials are instructed in how to be an effective evaluator are conducted periodically by the Commission. A distance education course entitled "DETC Evaluator Training Program" will be available (by June 1997) to train and update evaluators.

• **Renew Accreditation:** An accredited institution must take the steps necessary to renew its accreditation at least every five years (see Appendix B. 7). After this time, without affirmative action by the Accrediting Commission to continue or renew the institution's accreditation, the accreditation expires as of the date determined by the Commission. The Commission staff will send

the institution a notice stating that they are up for re-accreditation the following year. The institution will need to made application for re-accreditation by sending in the "Application for Accreditation" form (see Appendix G. 1) by the date specified.

Resignation from Accreditation

An applicant for initial accreditation may withdraw its application at **any time** during the accreditation process. For currently accredited institutions, the Accrediting Commission will accept a resignation from accreditation **only** if the institution's status with the Accrediting Commission is in "good standing," defined as:

- the institution had not been ordered to undergo or is not currently undergoing a specially-ordered accreditation review;
- the institution has filed all required reports or has otherwise met all of the stipulations set by the Accrediting Commission for its continued accreditation; and
- the institution's financial obligations to the Commission are current.

Review of Standards

The Accrediting Commission engages in a continuous review of its standards and procedures. Annually, the DETC's Research and Educational Standards Committee performs a formal review of the adequacy, currency, validity, and reliability of the standards and makes appropriate recommendations (see Appendix H. 5). The Commission invites suggestions for changes to the standards from all interested parties.

Q & A on Accreditation

Q. *How long does the accreditation process take?*

A. Generally, it can take 6 to 12 months for the entire procedure. A smaller school may be able to prepare for accreditation in as few as 5 months. The Accrediting Commission meets in January and June, so prospective applicants are advised to initiate the process at least 12 months before the meeting they wish to have their application considered.

Q. *From whom may one seek advice in preparing to undergo an accreditation review?*

A. The Accrediting Commission staff in Washington is available for consultation by mail, phone, or personal visit regarding any questions about the accrediting process, procedures, or standards. Please contact the Commission offices for assistance.

Q. *What other publications are useful to study as an institution prepares for an accreditation review?*

A. Besides this Handbook, one may wish to read the *DETC Business Standards Course* which explains the business standards in detail. The *Course Development Handbook,* the *Student Services Handbook,* and the *Advertising Handbook* are also useful. A new course entitled, *DETC Evaluator Training Program* (available in June 1997) is also an excellent guide.

Q. *May we mention the Accrediting Commission in our literature as an applicant?*

A. No. This would be inappropriate and has the potential to mislead the public about your institution's affiliation with DETC.

Q. *Does the Commission conduct meetings which explain in more detail the accreditation process?*

A. Yes. The Accrediting Commission frequently conducts Training Seminars for Accrediting Commission Examiners at which the staff of

applicant institutions are strongly encouraged to attend. There are also sessions on accreditation at virtually every DETC Conference and/or Workshop.

Q. *Must a distance study institution be located in the United States to qualify?*

A. No. Distance study institutions outside of the U.S. may apply for accreditation. A special Commission policy on non-U.S. institutions is found in Appendix C. 10 of this Handbook.

Q. *If an institution offers a Doctoral-level degree program, may it apply for accreditation?*

A. No. **All** of the institution's programs and degrees must qualify to apply. The Commission will not accredit institutions which offer degrees beyond the Master's degree level.

Q. *Must the school be in operation two years before it may apply for accreditation?*

A. The institution must have 24 months of continuous operation as a distance study institution before it may be accredited. The Accrediting Commission will not accredit an institution with fewer than two years' of distance study operation, although a school may initiate an application near the end of its first 24 month period of existence.

Q. *Can an accredited school transfer its accreditation or the benefits of its accreditation to another institution or individual by sale, contract, franchise, or other arrangement?*

A. No. Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council is **institutional** and is extended only to the accredited institution and its approved programs. Accreditation cannot be transferred in any way to an entity not under the ownership, management, and control of the accredited institution. All distance study programs and distance study-related activities under the ownership, management, and control of the accredited institution **must be included** in the accreditation, or **none** can be accredited. When an accredited institution undergoes a change in ownership, management,

or control, the institution must undergo a complete accreditation review (see Appendix C. 3).

Q. *How long is an application for accreditation valid?*

A. An application for accreditation is valid for one year from the date it is received by the Commission.

Q. *What are the costs involved for accreditation?*

A. There are **actually** four types of fees:

1. on-site review fees
2. subject specialist review fees
3. annual accreditation fees
4. DETC annual dues

To estimate the on-site review fees and subject specialist review fees, see Appendix I. 1. The DETC dues and accreditation fees are based on annual tuition receipts. Consult Appendices I. 1 and 2 of this Handbook.

Q. *Are accrediting reports and documents made public?*

A. No. The process of accreditation is regarded as a confidential one, and accreditation reports and documents are treated in a confidential manner. The public is notified of final Accrediting Commission decisions, but chair reports, school responses, etc., are not released to the public.

Q. *Must all courses, including kits, tools, textbooks, hardware, etc., be sent to the Accrediting Commission for review?*

A. Yes. However, for applicants with an extremely large number of courses, subject specialist evaluators may be appointed to accompany the examining committee visiting the applicant institution.

Q. *Will course material be returned to the institution after the material is reviewed by subject specialists?*

A. No. All course material, including kits, tools, textbooks, and hardware, is consumed in the course review process and is not returned to the applicant institution.

Q. *Do outside observers serve on visiting Examining Committees?*

A. The Commission routinely extends an invitation to the appropriate state licensing agency to have someone serve on the Examining Committee as an Observer. On occasion, federal officials are also invited to serve as observers. The institution pays no examination fees for such observers.

Q. *Do "competitors" serve on visiting Examining Committees?*

A. No. Evaluators known to have competing interests with the applicant institution are not appointed to serve on a committee. DETC accreditation is, however, a "peer review" process. Committees are made up of executive officers of other accredited institutions.

Q. *Must the travel expenses for visiting Examining Committees be paid in addition to the on-site examination fees?*

A. No. The on-site examination fee is a "flat fee" which includes the cost of travel for the Examining Committee members (except for non-U.S. institutions).

Q. *How much does the accreditation visit cost?*

A. The fees for an on-site review vary according to the size of the institution and the number of its courses and site locations. A school with one course seeking initial accreditation can expect the fee to range between $4,000 and $7,000. Larger institutions with many courses can expect a higher fee (see Appendix I. 1).

Q. *How long does an accreditation examination visit take?*

A. Generally, most visits take one day, starting about 9:30 a.m. until the Committee feels it has completed its task. The purpose of the visit is to verify the information that the school already supplied in their Self-Evaluation Report and to answer any additional questions. Visitation dates are set for a mutually agreed upon time. In very large institutions, visits can take two days.

Introduction to Standards, Guides, Policies, and Rating Forms

In order to implement the process of Accreditation described in this book, the Accrediting Commission has approved and published "Accreditation Standards." It is these Standards by which the Commission measures the educational quality, financial responsibility, administrative competency, and general worthiness of an institution for distance study accreditation. They are the true core of the DETC accreditation process, the stated criteria signifying excellence in correspondence education.

Several documents are available to assist the institutions, the on-site evaluators, and the Commissioners in understanding the meaning of the standards and in preparing materials by which the Commissioners may assess the institution. They are:

1. **Appendix A**—the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* and the *Institutional Summary Profile*;

2. **Appendix B**—*Other Guides to Self-Evaluation* for providing guidance with special activities, changes, or programs at the institution;

3. **Appendix C**—*Special Policies* for understanding the standards in the case of special situations; and

4. **Appendix D**—*Rating Forms* for use with "Accreditation Standards," and special rating forms which supplement the general rating form.

Institutions will find that the numbering system in the "Guide to Self-Evaluation" found in Appendix A parallels the questions in the "Examiner's Rating Form" found in Appendix D. 1.

Following is an "Index to Special Guides, Policies, and Rating Forms" that will assist schools in referring to information on special circumstances:

School Circumstances Requiring Commission Action

Index to Special Guides, Policies, and Rating Forms

Circumstance	Guide to SER	Policy	Rating Form
Marketing Change	App. B. 1	App. C. 2	App. D. 1
Ownership Change	App. B. 2	App. C. 3	App. D. 1
School Location Change	App. B. 3	App. C. 4	App. D. 3
New Combination Program and/or New Training Site	App. B. 4	App. C. 7 & C. 8	App. D. 5
Combination Program (Distance Study-Resident)	App. B. 4	App. C. 6	App. D. 5
Degree Programs	App. B. 5	App. C. 9	App. D. 4
Non-Private Institution	App. B. 6	--	App. D. 1
Five-Year Renewal	App. B. 7	--	App. D. 1
Special Ordered Visit	App. B. 8	--	App. D. 1
New/Revised Course Approval	--	App. C. 5	App. D. 2
Non-U.S. Institutions	--	App. C. 10	App. D. 6

App. = Appendix

Revised January 1996

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Accreditation Standards

These Accreditation Standards serve as benchmarks in helping the institution's staff and faculty evaluate important aspects of their institution's programs. These standards were developed by the appropriate DETC Committees with the advice and cooperation of outstanding authorities on education and accreditation. The standards were recommended for adoption by the Accrediting Commission by the DETC's Board of Trustees. The standards provide a guide for the evaluators and Commissioners as they evaluate the school as part of the accrediting program. The Accrediting Commission has also adopted and incorporated the DETC Business Standards as standards for accredited institutions.

Accredited distance education institutions possess the following characteristics:

I. Educational Objectives

A. Description of Objectives

Educational objectives are clearly defined and simply stated. They indicate what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students. The character, nature, quality, value, and source of the instruction and educational service are set forth in language understood by the types of students enrolled. If a course prepares for an occupation or field of occupations, the objectives clearly state the types of occupations for which preparation is given.

B. Appropriate Objectives

The objectives of the institution must be **reasonably attainable and be [added 1/96]** of such a nature that they can be achieved through distance study. **For non-credit courses, the learning objectives must, where appropriate to the nature and type of the course, be comparable to similar non-credit courses offered in traditional institutions [added 1/96].** Appropriate objectives include the development of skills, the provision of job-related training, the imparting of information, the training in the application of knowledge, and the development of desirable habits and attitudes. Evaluation of the educational program is based on

(Standard II. Educational Materials, cont'd.)

H. Illustrations

Illustrations are used intelligently and they have educational and/or inspirational value.

I. Printing and Binding

Instructional materials are legibly reproduced, well-manufactured, suitably bound, and attractive in layout and format.

III. Educational Services

A. Examination Services

The submission of examinations which adequately cover the materials is required. Adequate evaluation, correction services, and necessary counseling by an instructor are provided for examinations.

B. Resident Training

Resident training should supplement the distance study course whenever it is necessary to attain the stated educational objectives.

C. Handling Student Inquiries

Relevant inquiries from students are welcome and are answered promptly and satisfactorily with due regard for any legal and professional restrictions.

D. Individual Differences

Adequate provisions are made to meet the individual differences of students and to provide counseling and guidance as required to assist students to attain their educational goals.

E. Handling Failures

Students who fail to do satisfactory work are encouraged to continue until they either show inability to do satisfactory work or until they demonstrate satisfactory progress.

(Standard I. Educational Objectives - B. Appropriate Objectives, cont'd.)

the announced course objectives and the success with which the objectives are fulfilled.

II. Educational Materials

A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the announced objectives.

B. Up-to-date Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice.

C. Authorship

Instructional materials are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by correspondence educators skilled in preparing materials for distance study use.

D. Reading Level

The reading difficulty of the instructional materials is keyed to the reading competence of enrollees in the course.

E. Study Instructions

Suitable instructions on how to study the course clearly indicate to the students what to do and how to learn effectively.

F. Organization of Instructional Materials

The organization and presentation of the instructional materials are in accord with sound, psychological principles of learning.

G. Teaching Devices

Instructional programs make effective use of appropriate teaching devices and supplemental instructional aids.

(Standard III. Educational Services, cont'd.)

F. Encouragement of Students

A constructive program is followed to encourage students to start, continue, and finish the courses in which they have enrolled.

G. Student Evaluation of Courses

Reactions of students are sought as one basis for evaluating and improving instructional materials and services.

H. Appropriate Technology

The institution uses appropriate technology in the process of enhancing educational services [added 1/96].

IV. Student Services

A. Grading of Examinations

Minimum student services include prompt return of accurately graded examinations.

B. Student Records and Materials

Ample study materials should be provided at all times to students. Essential student records should be adequately maintained.

C. Counseling and Employment Assistance

Competent counseling should be available to students on request. If employment assistance and other services for alumni are offered, they should be as described.

V. Student Success and Satisfaction

A. Student Success and Learning Outcomes

The institution can show that a high proportion of students are satisfied with the training and educational services provided [changed 1/96].47

(Standard V. Student Success and Satisfaction, cont'd.)

B. Progress Through the Course(s)

The institution can demonstrate that [added 1/96] a satisfactory percentage of enrolled students start the course, continue their studies, and finish. A sample check of the students in **the institution** [changed 1/96] must indicate a reasonable achievement in, and completion of, their course and satisfaction with the services which the institution is rendering.

C. Achievement of Learning Objectives and Benefits [added 1/96]

The institution has in place an ongoing procedure that can demonstrate that a satisfactory percentage of graduates: (1) have attained the learning objectives established for the course; and (2) have been successful in achieving the benefits established for the course [added 1/96].

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff

A. Owners, Principals, and Executive Staff

The institution's owners, principals, officers, and managers possess sound reputations and can show a record of integrity and ethical conduct in their business relations. The Chief Executive Officer and top school administrators possess appropriate backgrounds, qualifications, and experience for their positions and have demonstrated the ability to direct school operations successfully.

B. Educational Director

A qualified person serves as the educational director. The educational director has overall administrative responsibilities for the educational program and a policy-making voice in advertising, sales, and collections.

C. Department Heads

In large institutions, department heads or other qualified persons are delegated educational, editorial, and research responsibilities within subject fields.

(Standard VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff, cont'd.)

D. Instructors

The institution has a sufficient number of qualified instructors to give individualized instructional service to each student.

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements

A. Admission Practices

The admissions practices of the institution fully conform to the provisions of DETC Business Standard II B [changed 1/96].

B. Enrollment Agreements (Contracts)

The written agreement and/or other written documents left with the student specify clearly the nature and scope of the course, the services and obligations to which the institution is committed, and the privileges and obligations, financial and otherwise, of the student. Any changes in tuition, procedures, or rates must be made applicable to all future enrollees. **The institution must use a written enrollment agreement that conforms to the provisions of DETC Business Standards II A and II B [added 1/96].**

VIII. Advertising and Promotional Literature/Recruitment Personnel [changed 1/96]

A. Advertising and Promotion

All advertising, promotional or recruitment activities of the institution fully conform to DETC Business Standard I A [changed 1/96].

B. Control of Student Recruitment Personnel [changed 1/96]

The institution's policies and practices in the hiring, training, monitoring, and managing of all sales or recruiting personnel fully conform to DETC Business Standard II C [changed 1/96].

IX. Financial Responsibility

A. Financial Practices

The institution shows, **by complete, comparative financial statements covering its two most recent fiscal years, [changed 1/96]** that it is financially responsible and that it can meet its financial obligations to provide service to its students. *(Financial statements must be prepared "in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.")*

B. Demonstrated Operation

First time applicant institutions can document continuous sound and ethical operations in all respects. Applicant institutions must document two continuous years of sound and ethical operation as a bona fide distance education institution [changed 1/96].

X. Tuition Policies, Collection Procedures, and Refunds

A. Tuition Policies

Tuition policies are in keeping with the provisions of the DETC Business Standards Section III A.

B. Tuition Collection Procedures

Tuition collection practices and procedures are fair. They encourage the progress of students and seek to retain their good will. The right to protect its financial interests is inherent with any accredited institution. Its tuition collection practices are in keeping with sound and ethical business standards.

C. Tuition Refund Policies

The institution recognizes that there are legitimate reasons why enrolled students may not be able to complete their training with benefit to themselves. Accordingly, the school has a policy for equitable tuition adjustment in such cases. Records are maintained on tuition refunds and enrollment cancellations to provide a reference source for management analysis.

XI. Plant and Equipment

A. Plant and Equipment

The building, workspace, and equipment comply with local fire, building, health, and safety regulations and are adequately equipped to handle the educational program of the institution.

B. Record Protection

Educational records of all students are maintained in a safe, fireproof, and reasonably accessible place as long as they are likely to be needed. Other records are maintained in accordance with current educational, administrative, business, and legal practice.

XII. Research and Self-Improvement

A. Research and Self-Improvement Studies

An accredited institution shows evidence of progressiveness and of effort to improve operating efficiency and service. Sound research procedures and techniques are used to measure how effectively the announced course objectives are being met.

B. Revision Practices

Effective procedures are used to constantly improve materials and keep them current and up-to-date.

C. Professional Growth

Interest in improving the course of instruction and in the upgrading of personnel and faculty is demonstrated through membership in professional associations, review and application of research, and practical experience in the general field of education and the specific field of distance education.

D. Self-Study Program

An accredited institution has an established program or plan reflecting a desire to improve its services to students and to provide for the growth of the institution and its staff and faculty.

A. Guide to Self-Evaluation and Institutional Summary Profile

		# of Pages
1.	Guide to Self-Evaluation **[changed 1/96]**	40
2.	Institutional Summary Profile	5

Guide to Self-Evaluation

Introduction

This Guide was developed to assist institutions seeking accreditation or re-accreditation in preparing their Self-Evaluation Report (SER). Please keep in mind that it is just a guide; additional information may be needed to explain how your institution meets and/or exceeds the standards, policies, and procedures of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council.

The Self-Evaluation Report

The SER serves as a document that tells a story about your institution, including how the institution originated, what your institution offers the field of distance education and training, how it is managed, how it complies with accreditation standards and requirements, and what the institution's plans are for future improvement and growth. It should also present in a business-like way insightful analyses into trends and patterns within an institution and discuss candidly the larger issues and challenges confronting it. A SER is, fundamentally, a road map for institutions in developing a truly self-analytical and honestly introspective picture of who they are and where they are going.

When the Accrediting Commission asks institutions to prepare a SER, two purposes are served: (1) institutions are given a rationale for conducting a critical self-evaluation; and (2) information which the visiting Examining Committee will need during the visit, and which the Accrediting Commission needs for its background study of the institution, is gathered in one place.

The institution must address each of the 12 accreditation standards and all of the subsections in a logical sequence. The report should be complete in all aspects, and leave no room for speculation or misinterpretation by the reader. Feel free to cross-reference responses if a particular response sounds redundant. If a particular question does not apply to your type of institution, simply respond "not applicable."

The SER should include compilations of student records and statistics, and a careful, "full disclosure" analysis of the school's "problem areas." The

report should always analyze as well as describe; it should seek to tell readers the "why" of their methods, not just the "what" and "how." It should identify current challenges facing the institution and report on what actions are planned to address these challenges.

Writing the Report

On the basis of the collective experiences of applicant institutions undergoing self-evaluation and accreditation review, institutions are advised to become completely familiar with the standards for accreditation and prepare the SER with these and the following suggestions in mind:

- The SER often serves as the first impression of the institution and careful attention should be given to its form and appearance.
- The responsibility for preparing the report should be delegated to a senior executive with close coordination with chief executive officers.
- Careful planning, coordination, and realistic time scheduling are essential. In large institutions it may take up to six months to prepare the SER.
- The preparation and actual writing of the report should involve as many staff members as possible. Every member of the institution's supervisory staff should review the report before the time of the on-site visit.
- If any changes occur between the time the SER was written and the on-site visit, supplements should be prepared and given to the examiners on the day of the visit.

Preparing the Final SER Report

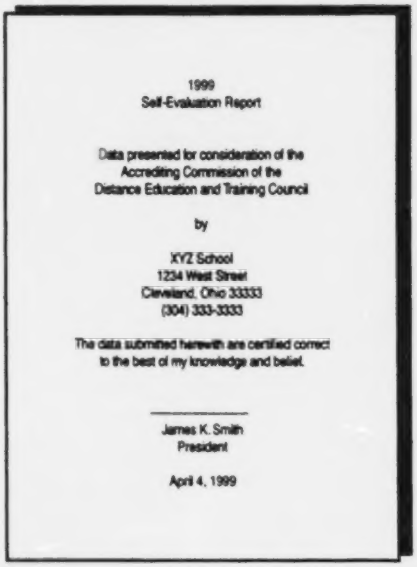
The Self-Evaluation Report should begin with a title page and a table of contents that references both the body of the report as well as any appendices. The report must include an *Institutional Summary Profile* after the table of contents. The *Institutional Summary Profile* includes basic data and a general description about the institution, its programs, its mission, and its goals.

Special policies are used for institutions offering academic degrees, combination distance study-resident training programs, and when an institution is located outside the United States. Consult the appropriate Appendices in this Handbook for the various policies and rating forms which apply to your institution.

General Guidelines for Format

The complete "Guide to Self-Evaluation Report" is available on disk in Microsoft Word 7.0 (except for the charts). In addition, here are general guidelines for the overall format of the report:

- Report should be printed on 8 1/2 x 11 inch white paper.
- The report should begin with a Title Page. The title page should include:
  - Name of Institution
  - Address of Institution
  - Phone number of Institution
  - Certification of accuracy: "The data submitted herewith are certified correct to the best of my knowledge and belief."
  - Signature of CEO. CEO must sign the title page of each copy of the report.
  - Name and title of CEO
  - Date the report is prepared



1999
Self-Evaluation Report

Data presented for consideration of the
Accrediting Commission of the
Distance Education and Training Council

by

XYZ School
1234 West Street
Cleveland, Ohio 33333
(304) 333-3333

The data submitted herewith are certified correct
to the best of my knowledge and belief.

_____

James K. Smith
President

April 4, 1999

Sample of Title Page

- Pages should be numbered consecutively with the institution's name and date of report at the top or bottom of **each** page of the report.

- A table of contents, including a list of supporting exhibits, should be included.

- Directly after the Table of Contents (before the *Institutional Summary Profile*) include driving directions to the institution from the hotel where the committee is staying (check with Commission staff) and from the nearest airport. Include the name of the institution, address, phone number, a map, and narrative directions.

- Each SER question should be followed by an answer.

- Exhibits should follow the body of the SER. Exhibits should be properly numbered, labeled, and referenced.

- The report and exhibits should be securely bound, fastened, or inserted in a binder to prevent loss or mixing of pages, but should allow the reader the ability to remove a page or document.

- Ten copies of the report should be submitted to the Executive Secretary at the Council offices. Larger institutions may be asked to submit additional copies. Institutions with large reports and numerous exhibits should individually package self-contained copies of each of the 10 reports and exhibits to aid in the shipment of the report to the Examining Committee members.

Standards for Accreditation

I. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Summary of Standards: Institution has reasonably attainable and clearly stated educational course objectives.

A. Description of Objectives

Standard: *Educational objectives are clearly defined and simply stated. They indicate what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students. The character, nature, quality, value, and source of the instruction and educational service are set forth in language understood by the types of students enrolled. If a course prepares for an occupation or field of occupations, the objectives clearly state the types of occupations for which preparation is given.*

1. State the educational objectives of each course or program offered by the institution (what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students).

2. Describe the procedure used to ensure that the institution's advertising and promotional literature claims for the course(s) are in consonance with course objectives.

3. For vocational/occupational courses, describe the occupation for which the course prepares students as referenced in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* of the U.S. Department of Labor or other similar references.

4. State how the course objectives indicate the type of student for whom the course is intended.

5. State how the course objectives indicate the kind of education or training offered, and describe the expected outcomes, in terms of skills, knowledge, licenses, or degrees which graduates will possess.

6. State the relationship between the institutional mission and the needs of the public served, i.e., describe what social and educational/training needs are being met by the course.

7. Provide evidence supporting any advertised employment opportunities that will be available for graduates for each program with occupational objectives.

8. Provide supportive data and information on the employer acceptance of graduates of the institution's vocational/occupational courses.

9. For degree-granting institutions, describe how the educational objectives for your programs are comparable to those of accredited resident institutions for the award of degrees of the same nature and level.

B. Appropriate Objectives

Standard: The objectives of the institution must be ***reasonably attainable and be [added 1/96]*** *of such a nature that they can be achieved through distance study.* ***For non-credit courses, the learning objectives must, where appropriate to the nature and type of the course, be comparable to similar non-credit courses offered in traditional institutions [added 1/96].*** *Appropriate objectives include the development of skills, the provision of job-related training, the imparting of information, the training in the application of knowledge, and the development of desirable habits and attitudes. Evaluation of the educational program is based on the announced course objectives and the success with which the objectives are fulfilled.*

1. Describe the process by which the objectives are determined or revised for the institution and for courses.

2. Explain how the objectives are kept up-to-date and the ways in which institution officials interact with relevant communities of interest to keep the institution and course objectives current.

3. Describe how objectives are achievable through the distance study method, and tell how the institution determines the extent to which stated course objectives are achieved, i.e., describe what outcomes assessment measures are used to determine course outcomes.

4. Explain how the course objectives meet the employment needs in the market for the prospective student.

5. Explain how outcomes assessment data are used for quality control and improvement of courses and educational services.

6. Give examples of how surveys of students, outside evaluations by experts, comments from students and employers, and evaluations by school staff are used to assess the success of the institution in meeting its overall institutional objectives and to continually upgrade services and courses.

7. For combination distance study/resident programs, describe how the predominant form of instruction is distance study.

8. For institutions with combination programs, describe the extent to which residential and/or external independent study are used to supplement the overall correspondence method.

9. **For institutions offering non-credit courses, explain how the learning objectives, where appropriate to the nature and type of the course, are comparable to similar non-credit courses offered in traditional institutions [added 1/96].**

II. EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Summary of Standards: Institution offers educationally sound and up-to-date courses.

A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials

Standard: *Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the announced objectives.*

1. Explain and provide a summary of how students who have completed the course have learned enough to achieve the announced course objectives.

2. Describe ways in which the institution has determined that the instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive and have sufficient depth to prepare students to master the subject.

3. Explain how the instructional materials equip students to meet any stated or implied employment or vocational objectives.

B. Up-to-date Instructional Materials

Standard: *Instructional materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice.*

1. Provide evidence showing that course materials are up-to-date and accurate, and describe how they reflect "state-of-the-art" knowledge and practices.

2. Describe the procedure for revising courses, and tell how often they are revised.

3. Describe how content errors in course materials are corrected between regularly scheduled revisions.

C. Authorship

Standard: *Instructional materials are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by distance study educators skilled in preparing materials for correspondence/distance education use.*

1. If standard textbooks are used, list titles, authors, publishers, and copyright dates. Describe any customization rights accorded the institution by outside publishers.

2. Give the qualifications of authors and explain why the texts were selected and how they have been adapted to the special requirements of distance study use.

3. Describe how study guides are prepared for use with standard texts.

4. If outside authors prepared materials specifically for the institution, explain how they are qualified to prepare materials for use in distance study.

5. List the outside educational consultants, if any, who have been retained to assist in writing materials, and describe their qualifications and role.

6. Explain how subject matter experts and faculty are involved in writing or revising learning materials.

D. Reading Level

Standard: *The reading difficulty of the instructional materials is keyed to the reading competence of enrollees in the course.*

1. Provide results of the most recent readability tests or checks for courses, and describe how tests were conducted.

2. Explain how the reading level of instructional material is keyed to the reading competence of the average enrollee.

3. Provide examples of results of any internal analyses which demonstrate that students who possess only minimum admission requirements are able to comprehend the materials and successfully complete the course.

E. Study Instructions

Standard: *Suitable instructions on how to study the course clearly indicate to the students what to do and how to learn effectively.*

1. Provide samples of instructions to students on how to proceed through the course as a whole and to learn effectively.

2. Describe how the institution gives guidance or remediation on learning techniques to students as they proceed through the course.

F. Organization of Instructional Materials

Standard: *The organization and presentation of the instructional materials are in accord with sound, psychological principles of learning.*

1. Explain how the organization and presentation of the subject matter in the courses accommodate the principles of modern learning psychology.

2. State if students are required to submit every assignment in prescribed sequence in order to graduate and if a minimum grade is required. Describe any exceptions made to the order in which students may proceed through the course.

G. Teaching Devices

Standard: *Instructional programs make effective use of appropriate teaching devices and supplemental instructional aids.*

1. Describe any kits, equipment, tools, videos, diskettes, audio tapes, online learning systems, telecommunications, CD-ROM disks, or other media used in the courses.

2. Explain how these devices enhance instruction and motivation.

3. Describe how the devices are integrated with texts and lesson assignments.

4. Describe any institutional policies relating to the release of kits to students, return of equipment, or any tuition payment policies affecting kits or equipment, and tell where the policies are published.

5. Explain how instructional materials are supplied to the student.

6. Provide copies of all lesson shipment schedules.

7. Confirm that students who pay in advance for the entire course, can, upon request, receive all instructional materials if they choose to discontinue submitting required assignments.

H. Illustrations

Standard: *Illustrations are used intelligently, and they have educational and/or inspirational value.*

1. Provide representative samples (taken from courses) of illustrations, graphs, and drawings for educational or motivational value.

2. Explain how the illustrations enhance the course in regards to presentation and educational and/or inspirational value.

I. Printing and Binding

Standard: *Instructional materials are legibly reproduced, well-manufactured, suitably bound, and attractive in layout and format.*

1. Describe the reproduction and binding process used for lessons and provide samples of typical lesson pages.

2. Describe the procedures in place to maintain overall quality of the printing, binding, and packaging process for course materials.

3. Describe procedures used to create effective audio or video tapes, CD-ROM, diskettes, or other non-print media.

III. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Summary of Standards: Institution provides satisfactory educational services.

A. Examination Services

Standard: *The submission of examinations which adequately cover the materials is required. Adequate evaluation, correction services, and necessary counseling by an instructor are provided for examinations.*

1. Describe the types of test items that are used (objective, essay, etc.).

2. Describe methods used for submission of exams (i.e., tele-test, exam scan cards, etc.).

3. Explain if any oral or non-written evaluations are used and how they properly measure if the student has mastered the material.

4. Explain in what ways evaluation tools assess student achievement and attainment of course objectives.

5. Describe how tests are checked for validity and reliability.

6. Explain what provisions exist for safeguarding test answers and proctoring examinations when required.

7. Explain how the number and length of examinations are determined and how the school ensures that the number of examinations and examination items are sufficient to measure student mastery of the learning objectives.

B. Resident Training

Standard: *Resident training should supplement the correspondence/ distance education course whenever it is necessary to attain the stated educational objectives.*

Note: If you provide resident training as a supplement to correspondence/ distance education, also answer questions in the "Guide for Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs" found in Appendix B. 4.

1. Describe the objectives of the resident program.

2. State what percentage of instruction the resident program constitutes, and list the tuition charged for each portion.

3. Explain at what point must a student enter the resident program.

4. Describe the capacity (in students taught per year) of the resident program included with each combination course offered.

C. Handling Student Inquiries

Standard: *Relevant inquiries from students are welcome and are answered promptly and satisfactorily with due regard for any legal and professional restrictions.*

1. Describe the process for handling student inquiries (written and oral) related to course content. Provide samples of responses to students.

2. Detail the educational and academic qualifications of persons replying to student inquiries.

3. State the average time (expressed in days) it takes to respond to a student's inquiry concerning course content.

4. Discuss the process for responding to administrative requests and the average response time.

5. Explain how the institution encourages and facilitates student inquiries.

D. Individual Differences

Standard: *Adequate provisions are made to meet the individual differences of students and to provide counseling and guidance as required to assist students to attain their educational goals.*

1. Explain what services are available for students having difficulty with the material, and describe what services are available for rapid learners.

2. Describe what efforts instructors make to provide remedial training to students experiencing difficulty with their studies.

E. Handling Failures

Standard: *Students who fail to do satisfactory work are encouraged to continue until they either show inability to do satisfactory work or until they demonstrate satisfactory progress.*

1. Explain the process for handling students who fail to do satisfactory work.

2. Describe the procedure for students to re-submit failed assignments; explain how they are graded and what weight is assigned to the repeat assignment.

3. Describe the institution's policy on student failure of a course and academic dismissal.

4. Provide the number of students dismissed for academic failure in the most recent year and the number of those who are disenrolled for other reasons. Indicate if they were dismissed for non-payment, failure to submit exams, etc.

F. Encouragement of Students

Standard: *A constructive program is followed to encourage students to start, continue, and finish the courses in which they have enrolled.*

1. Explain the institution's program for monitoring student progress and for encouraging students to start, continue, and finish the course in which they have enrolled. Provide samples of motivational commentaries on student work.

2. Explain who checks the students' records, how frequently they are checked, and whether an automated tracking system is used.

3. If letters or telephone calls are used to encourage submission of lessons, provide samples and explain the sequences and scheduling of their use.

4. Explain how efforts to encourage academic progress are separate from efforts for the collection of delinquent tuition.

G. Student Evaluation of Courses

Standard: *Reactions of students are sought as one basis for evaluating and improving instructional materials and services.*

1. Describe the ways in which reactions of students are sought as one basis for evaluating and improving instructional materials and services.

2. Give examples of how students are asked to evaluate the availability of academic help, encouragement to continue studying, quality of educational materials, strengths and weaknesses, level of difficulty, and the pace of the course.

3. If end-of-course critiques are used, describe how they differ from regular, periodic assessments.

4. Provide information on the institution's "revision of course" file and how students report printing and content errors.

5. Explain who maintains the revision file and how the file is used (to ensure currency of educational materials or accuracy of information).

6. Describe how the reactions of students are used to effect changes in educational materials and services, and discuss how ongoing assessment and revision efforts have resulted in changes made to courses or services.

H. Appropriate Technology

Standard: The institution uses appropriate technology in the process of enhancing educational services [added 1/96].

1. **Describe—and give examples of—how the institution uses appropriate technology in order to enhance educational services [added 1/96].**

2. **Discuss the institution's overall plans or approach to adopting new technology [added 1/96].**

3. **Discuss what equipment or technology, not currently in use at the institution, might profitably be used to improve services for students. Why haven't such technologies been adopted to date? [added 1/96]**

IV. STUDENT SERVICES

Summary of Standards: Institution offers adequate student services.

A. Grading of Examinations

Standard: *Minimum student services include prompt return of accurately graded examinations.*

1. Describe how the staff evaluates, corrects, services, and grades submitted assignments. Describe any use made of automated grading/scoring devices.

2. Explain what controls are in place to ensure the accuracy of correction, grading, and evaluation services.

3. Explain how long (in days) it takes to return evaluated lessons to students.

4. Explain the institution's system for controlling the receipt and tracking of exams and ensuring their prompt return to the student.

5. Describe the type of assistance provided to students who fail to complete assignments successfully.

6. Explain how the staff who evaluate assignments are qualified in the appropriate fields, and describe how they interact with students. Provide sample communications.

7. Give examples of how evaluation staff provide references to correct and incorrect answers.

8. Specify when and how often students' academic questions on lesson assignments are referred to subject specialists for review and comment.

B. Student Records and Materials

Standard: *Ample study materials should be provided at all times to students. Essential student records should be adequately maintained.*

1. Describe what formal records are kept on students and graduates, and for how long.

2. Describe how the institution keeps a record of receipt, grading, and return of exams. Provide samples of relevant records.

3. Explain what procedures are used for the maintenance and protection of student records.

4. Describe any data processing systems—including "back-up computer file" procedures—used to maintain records.

5. Describe transcript services, and attach a sample of a transcript (with student name deleted).

6. Present exhibits of completion certificates or diplomas awarded, and explain under what authority (e.g., board, charter, state authority, trade association, etc.) they are issued.

7. Describe how the institution's inventories of texts, kits, and other materials are maintained, and discuss how inventory levels are kept current.

C. Counseling and Employment Assistance

Standard: *Competent counseling should be available to students on request. If employment assistance and other services for alumni are offered, they should be as described.*

1. Describe the institution's program to offer employment-related advice counseling to students and alumni, even if no formal job placement assistance program is offered.

2. For courses that are vocationally oriented, submit information available on the number of alumni working in occupations related to the training provided.

3. Describe in detail the services for alumni, such as student publications, associations, clubs, user groups, etc.

4. Indicate the extent to which the institution assists its graduates with job placement, and what, if any, job assistance services are offered to students and/or alumni.

5. Indicate what promises, if any, are made to prospective students in terms of job placement or job advisory assistance.

6. Explain how the institution fulfills any stated or implied job placement service promises made to students.

Sample Table for C. 7.

Title	# of Grads	Prv. Worked	Placed	Related	Working	No Job	Not Found

7. If the institution advertises or provides a placement service, complete the table on page 17 for each course that includes a placement service.

   a. Course title ("Title")

   b. Total number of graduates for the most recent two years ("# of Grads")

   c. If student previously worked in the field for which the course trained— prior to or during enrollment ("Prv. worked")

   d. If student was placed by school in field for which the course trained ("Placed")

   e. If student is working or was placed by the school in other related fields ("Related")

   f. If student was unavailable for placement ("Working")

   g. If student could not find a job ("No Job")

   h. If student could not be found ("Not Found")

8. If information in the table is based on a follow-up of graduates and students, describe survey methodology and attach a sample of the survey forms, digest of response rates, number of follow-ups, sampling procedures, etc.

   a. Describe in detail what other services the institution has for its graduates (e.g., alumni association, student publication, etc.).

   b. Submit any other information available on the number of school alumni working in occupations related to the training provided.

V. STUDENT SUCCESS AND SATISFACTION

Summary of Standards: Institution has demonstrated ample student success and satisfaction.

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A. Student Success and Learning Outcomes

Standard: The institution can show that a high proportion of students are satisfied with the training and educational services provided [changed 1/96].

1. Describe efforts made to determine student success and satisfaction, and explain how the institution measures the outcomes of its course offerings.

2. Demonstrate—with sample student comments or those of employers or graduates—that students are satisfied with the course, as well as with the educational services offered. Attach summaries of student letters, surveys, assessment interviews, and testimonials which indicate overall satisfaction with the institution.

3. Describe the ways in which a student "complaint file" is kept and how it is categorized, investigated, and resolved satisfactorily.

B. Progress Through the Course(s)

Standard: The institution can demonstrate that [added 1/96] *a satisfactory percentage of enrolled students start the course, continue their studies, and finish. A sample check of the students in* ***the institution [changed 1/96]*** *must indicate a reasonable achievement in, and completion of, their course and satisfaction with the services which the institution is rendering.*

In order to demonstrate that students progress through their courses in satisfactory numbers, the institution should present a data chart for **each of its major courses**, i.e., courses/programs with significant enrollments.

The chart should show the student non-start rate, the lesson completion rate, and the course graduation rate. These rates are computed for a representative group of enrollees, each of whom has been enrolled in the course long enough to have graduated from it.

- **Non-start rate** is the percentage of enrolled and registered students in an institution's course or program who did not submit **any** required examination or lesson assignment for grading or servicing. A non-start is a student who is disenrolled in a course after registration, after the applicable cooling-off period, but prior to submitting the initial assignment.

- **Completion rate** is the ratio of assignments actually completed (the numerator) to the total number of required assignments in a course (the denominator).

- **Graduation rate** is a percentage of students in an institution's course or program who have satisfactorily completed all of the prescribed requirements of a given course or program.

Example: XYZ Institution's Computer Repair course has 12 lessons with a total of required 12 examinations. The total number of students who enrolled in the course is 430. Of this population, 67 people did not submit the first exam. The course data chart should look like the one on the next page.

If the course includes resident study, a chart showing the non-start, completion, and graduation rates should be prepared for the resident portion as well as the distance study portion. The data should be based upon the number of days in resident training rather than "lessons."

Exceptional cases: If an institution offers a course that has only two or three submissions/examinations, the institution need only submit the following information for that course:

Name of Course
Number of Lessons in Course
Number of Submissions/Examinations
Number of Enrollments
Non-Start Rate
Completion Rate
Graduation Rate

All Institutions: In addition to providing the charts and data requested above, please answer the following questions:

1. Describe how the non-start, drop-out, and completion rates are satisfactory in light of the nature of the course/program, the student body, and similar accredited distance education programs.

2. Describe any follow-up studies done on a continuing basis concerning student lesson completions.

3. Describe how these studies have been used to improve completion and graduation rates.

Sample of Course Data Chart

Computer Repair Course

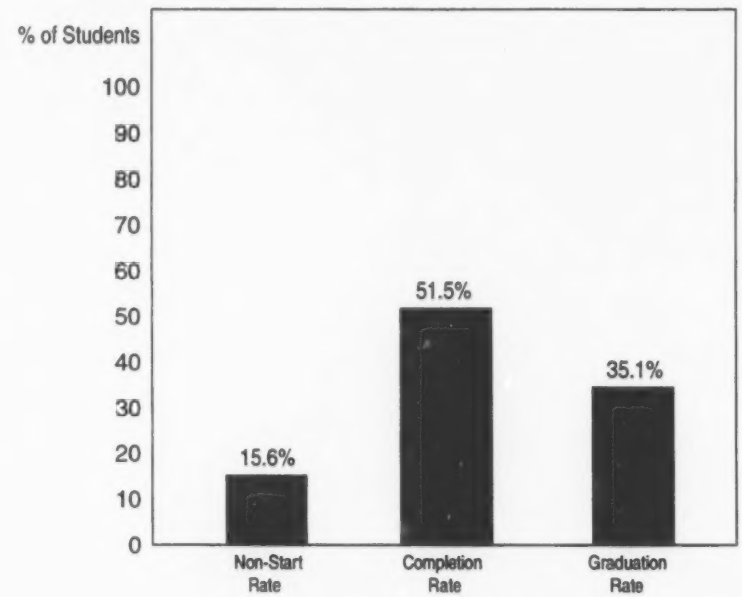
12 Lessons in Course
12 Examinations in Course
Sample of 430 Enrollments

Non-Start Rate
67 / 430 = 15.6%

Completion Rate
2656 / 5160 = 51.5%

Graduation Rate
151 / 430 = 35.1%

	No. of Students	Percent Completing	Total Exams
Total Population	430		
Non-Start	67		
Exam 1	363	84.4	363
Exam 2	311	72.3	674
Exam 3	276	64.1	950
Exam 4	235	54.6	1185
Exam 5	222	51.6	1407
Exam 6	212	49.3	1619
Exam 7	197	45.8	1816
Exam 8	187	43.4	2003
Exam 9	176	40.9	2179
Exam 10	168	39.0	2347
Exam 11	158	36.7	2505
Exam 12	151	35.1	2656



C. Achievement of Learning Objectives and Benefits [added 1/96]

Standard: The institution has in place an ongoing procedure that can demonstrate that a satisfactory percentage of graduates: (1) have attained the learning objectives established for the course/program; and (2) have been successful in achieving the benefits established for the course [added 1/96].

1. **Describe the institution's ongoing procedures for conducting outcomes assessment [added 1/96].**

2. **Give the percent of graduates for each major course/program who attained the learning objectives established by the course/program and explain how this was determined. Provide supporting data or evidence [added 1/96].**

3. **Give the percent of graduates for each major course/program who have been successful in achieving the benefits established for the course/program and explain how this was determined. Provide supporting data or evidence [added 1/96].**

4. **Provide, or cross reference to other sections of this Self-Evaluation Report, any other data or documentation which demonstrates that the institution delivers what it promises to students [added 1/96].**

VI. QUALIFICATIONS OF PRINCIPALS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Summary of Standards: Institution has competent administrators, faculty, and staff.

A. Owners, Principals, and Executive Staff

Standard: *The institution's owners, principals, officers, and managers possess sound reputations and can show a record of integrity and ethical conduct in their business relations. The Chief Executive Officer and top school administrators possess appropriate backgrounds, qualifications, and experience for their positions and have demonstrated the ability to direct school operations successfully.*

1. Give the name, position, and qualifications of the senior executive officers.

2. Explain how the chief executive officer and other senior staff possess the background and demonstrate the ability to direct the institution's operations ethically and successfully.

3. Explain what experiences the executive staff has in distance/correspondence education methodology and administration.

4. Describe any previous educational administrative positions held by senior officials.

B. Educational Director

Standard: *A qualified person serves as the educational director. The educational director has overall administrative responsibilities for the educational program and a policy-making voice in advertising, sales, and collections.*

1. List the educational qualifications of the educational director, and describe the type of experience he or she has.

2. Describe the educational director's responsibilities for the educational program.

3. Discuss to what extent the educational director is involved in overall policy development, advertising, sales, and collection activities.

C. Department Heads

Standard: *In large institutions, department heads or other qualified persons are delegated educational, editorial, and research responsibilities within their subject fields.*

1. Describe the major functions of the department heads, if any. Attach job descriptions. If an educational director functions in place of a department head, mention this.

2. For each department head, indicate the:

    a. amount of weekly services rendered ("Weekly")

b. extent of formal education ("Educ.")

c. type of special training ("Spec. Trng.")

d. experience qualifying him or her for the position ("Exper.")

e. activity in trade and professional associations, unions, and professional writing ("Active")

3. To what extent are department heads involved in upgrading educational materials, equipment, and services.

D. Instructors

Standard: *The institution has a sufficient number of qualified instructors to give individualized instructional service to each student.*

1. Give names, positions, qualifications, and resumes of **all** academic/instructional staff and faculty.

2. Explain how instructors assist in developing and updating course material.

3. Explain how faculty are used in the distance education portion of courses, i.e., exam grading, telephone consultation with students, academic counseling, course revision, development of study guides, etc.

4. If outside faculty are used, explain how they are supervised.

5. List the ratio of qualified instructors to active studying students, by course.

6. Describe any use of outside faculty, consulting faculty, technical advisors, researchers, subject matter specialists, general consultants, or other such individuals retained by the institution.

7. Describe the contractual arrangements with the above groups, amount and type of service rendered, and the method of compensation given. Provide samples of contracts for such personnel.

8. Describe the stated policies and criteria for staff and faculty employment.

9. Submit copies of policy manuals that have been prepared for the guidance of instructional staff.

10. Describe any staff development and tuition assistance programs.

11. Describe how faculty are evaluated for job performance.

VII. ADMISSION PRACTICES AND ENROLLMENT AGREEMENTS

Summary of Standards: Institution carefully screens students for admission.

A. Admission Practices

Standard: The admissions practices of the institution fully conform to the provisions of DETC Business Standard II B [changed 1/96].

1. Explain student admission requirements (by course).

2. Describe the required age, previous formal education, occupation, and other related work experience of students.

3. Explain the institution's policy respective to admitting students still in high school or students within compulsory school age.

4. If a specific education level is required, explain how it is determined and if any exceptions are made.

5. Describe how educational qualifications are documented (e.g., diploma or transcript).

6. Explain how admissions requirements reflect the rights of students respective to discrimination against an individual because of race, sex, color, or national origin.

7. Describe any policies and procedures used in evaluating previous academic work and any policies which permit students to receive credit for previous studies or work experience.

8. Provide evidence that students who meet the minimum admission standards can achieve the announced objectives of the course.

9. Explain how admissions criteria is in consonance with advertising statements and promotional literature for the course.

10. Tell who determines acceptance standards and who determines final acceptance in marginal cases.

11. Explain what controls ensure that the admissions policy is consistently and uniformly applied.

12. Describe the principle reasons why students may be rejected or disenrolled by the institution.

13. Explain the policies and procedures for informing prospective students of any requirements for governmental or other licensing procedures which apply directly or indirectly to the particular areas served by the institution's courses.

B. Enrollment Agreements (Contracts)

Standard: *The written agreement and/or other written documents left with the student specify clearly the nature and scope of the course, the services and obligations to which the institution is committed, and the privileges and obligations, financial and otherwise, of the student. Any changes in tuition, procedures, or rates must be made applicable to all future enrollees.* ***The institution must use a written enrollment agreement that conforms to the provisions of DETC Business Standards II A and II B [added 1/96].***

1. Supply sample copies of enrollment agreements (contracts).

2. Submit copies of any affirmation forms, telephone verification scripts, or other forms used to process student applications or contracts.

3. Describe the procedures for transmitting a copy of a contract to a student and for handling any down payment.

4. Describe how sales representatives handle any registration or tuition receipts, and describe procedures used to monitor such practices.

5. Describe how the cancellation and settlement policy as printed on the enrollment contract is in conformance with the *DETC Business Standards.*

VIII. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE/CONTROL OF RECRUITMENT PERSONNEL [changed 1/96]

Summary of Standards: Institution advertises its courses truthfully and has adequate control of its sales or recruiting personnel.

A. Advertising and Promotion

Standard: All advertising, promotional or recruitment activities of the institution fully conform to DETC Business Standard I A [changed 1/96].

1. Describe the advertising and promotion programs of the institution, and explain who is responsible for the philosophy and techniques used in the preparation of advertising copy.

2. Describe how documented testimonials are used.

3. Explain how referrals are sought from students.

4. Explain any discounts, premiums, or cash awards made to individuals who refer other prospective students.

5. Tell who is responsible for ensuring that all advertising is consistent, true, and that it correctly represents institutional and course objectives, as well as admissions requirements.

6. If sales representatives/agents are permitted to place advertising which they develop, explain the procedures used to ensure compliance with applicable business standards and regulations.

7. If outside advertising agencies are retained, explain how the advertising copy is reviewed and controlled by the institution.

8. Supply copies of all printed advertisements, radio and TV scripts, and mailing pieces used within the last 12 months to invite inquiries from prospective students or inform prospective students of institution programs. *(Two sets of promotional devices such as videotapes or TV ads on videotape may be submitted with the SER. These items should also be on display and available for viewing during the on-site visit.)*

9. Supply copies of any institutional advertising materials in use to inform particular occupational groups, employers, other educational institutions, or the general public of the courses and services offered.

10. Supply copies of all sales letters, printed materials, and catalogs mailed or delivered to individuals on a direct mail basis or in response to inquiries from prospective students. To ensure conformity with the DETC Business Standards, refer to Appendix F.

11. Describe how advertising and promotional budget figures are established for any given period, and explain what percent of the school's total operating budget is used for advertising and promotional purposes.

12. Give examples of advertisements and promotional literature which include the full and correct name and location of the institution and disclose the fact that correspondence/distance education is given.

B. Control of Recruitment Personnel [changed 1/96]

Standard: The institution's policies and practices in the hiring, training, monitoring, and managing of all sales or recruiting personnel fully conform to DETC Business Standard II C [changed 1/96].

(This section is intended for use by institutions with recruiting personnel, sales representatives, agents, telemarketers, or any other person or service whose role is to recruit students with or without compensation by the institution.)

1. Describe any direct mail, telemarketing, or other marketing methods.

2. Describe the screening and selection procedures used in recruiting sales representatives.

3. Describe the training program for sales representatives and how the program meets all DETC requirements.

4. Describe the training and supervision process of any other outside agencies or persons (other than institution's sales personnel) used to solicit prospective students.

5. If sales representatives are employed, answer the following:

   a. Number of sales personnel

   b. Number that are full time—institution provides sole source of income

   c. Title used to designate sales personnel

   d. Average length of service

   e. Average annual income

   f. Maximum income

   g. Minimum income

6. Provide copies of any studies and/or records of school trends in compensation levels, turnover, supervisory ratio, number of complaints arising from agent discharge, etc.

7. Explain how the sales representative's written agreement with the institution spells out the rights and provisions of both the institution and the sales representative. Supply copies of sample written contracts with sales representatives.

8. Describe the policies and procedures used to license and bond sales personnel in the various states.

9. Explain how sales personnel are informed of and kept up-to-date on changing federal and state laws.

10. Provide a complete description of all the sales representative compensation plans used.

11. If sales supervisors are used, report on the number of such supervisors and the number of persons whom they manage.

12. If the sales organization is large, describe what controls are used to ensure the ethical conduct of sales personnel.

13. If the institution has a sales organization, give the following information for each office in the sales organization:

    a. Name of office

    b. Address of office

    c. Name of supervisor

    d. Dates of employment

    f. Amount of salary or compensation

    g. Added incentives

    h. Territory covered

    i. Number of salespersons

14. Supply copies of current sales manuals provided sales representatives and letters and bulletins furnished for their guidance. Include copies of all training manuals provided to supervisors and any other sales aids (charts, recordings, or "pitch" books) provided to sales personnel for use in sales presentations.

15. Describe the training programs used by the school for newly employed sales personnel.

16. Explain any policies and procedures used to monitor and control the actions of sales personnel.

17. Show evidence that each sales representative clearly understands and takes seriously the Code of Ethics for Sales Representatives of the DETC (see Appendix F).

18. Provide the percent of turnover for the institution's sales force in the past two years, and state what the average length of service is for sales personnel.

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IX. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Summary of Standards: Institution is financially able to deliver high quality educational services.

A. Financial Practices

Standard: *The institution shows,* ***by complete, comparative financial statements covering its two most recent fiscal years [changed 1/96],*** *that it is financially responsible and that it can meet its financial obligations to provide service to its students. (Financial statements must be prepared "in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.")*

1. Submit copies of the institution's, or in the case of corporate-owned institutions, the parent's, comparative annual financial statements for the last two fiscal years. Financial statements must be prepared "in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles." This includes the use of the **accrual method of accounting**. If the parent's financial statements do not include operating statements for the institution itself, separate school statements should also be included.

2. Submit a copy of the Teach-Out Commitment using the appropriate form in Appendix G (3 or 4) executed by the ultimate owner or corporate entity accepting all obligations for the fulfillment of agreements made with students.

3. Describe the budget-making process used by the institution.

4. State if the current assets are sufficient to meet the current liabilities and describe any cost control/analysis systems used.

5. Describe what reserves are kept for honoring future obligations and bad debts.

6. Explain how the accounts payable (numbers, amounts, and age) reflect sound financial responsibility and management.

7. Describe how inventories of course materials are adequate for current and future servicing requirements.

8. Describe the extent and allocation of insurance coverage.

9. For an institution with resident training program(s), explain what liability coverage exists for students at resident training sites.

B. Demonstrated Operation

Standard: First time applicant institutions can document continuous sound and ethical operations in all respects. Applicant institutions must document two continuous years of sound and ethical operation as a bona fide distance education institution [changed 1/96].

1. Describe how the institution has achieved two years of sound financial and ethical operation.

2. Supply evidence and documentation which demonstrates two continuous years of sound and ethical operations.

X. TUITION POLICIES, COLLECTION PROCEDURES, AND REFUNDS

Summary of Standards: Institution has fair and equitable tuition and refund policies.

A. Tuition Policies (An institution which does not charge tuition need not complete this section.)

Standard: *Tuition policies are in keeping with the provisions of the DETC Business Standards Section III A.*

1. State whether the total course price is the same for all persons at a given time (except for allowable discounts). Provide samples of discounts used in the past 12 months.

2. State if price discounts have a published termination date.

3. Explain how any aptitude tests and student contests are administered.

4. Describe any scholarship programs, and indicate the sources of funds and who makes the selection of recipients.

B. Tuition Collection Procedures

Standard: *Tuition collection practices and procedures are fair. They encourage the progress of students and seek to retain their good will. The right to protect its financial interests is inherent with any accredited institution. Its tuition collection practices are in keeping with sound and ethical business standards.*

1. Describe in detail the policies and procedures for the institution's collection of tuition.

2. State if collection notices, forms, and telephone scripts used by outside collection agencies conform to ethical business practices.

3. Explain how collection practices encourage the student to proceed with the course.

4. Supply a complete set of **all** sample notices and collection letters used by the institution.

5. If outside collection agencies are used, state the percentage of accounts that are turned over to such agencies.

6. Provide the name and address of each agency used, and provide copies of the signed contracts with each agency and the procedures used by them.

7. Enclose a complete set of forms and collection letters used by each agency.

8. Provide a sample of the written ethical standards furnished by the institution to any outside agencies.

9. Explain how the institution monitors the outside agency's adherence to these standards.

C. Tuition Refund Policies

Standard: *The institution recognizes that there are legitimate reasons why enrolled students may not be able to complete their training with benefit to themselves. Accordingly, the school has a policy for equitable tuition adjustment in such cases. Records are maintained on tuition*

refunds and enrollment cancellations to provide a reference source for management analysis.

1. Describe the policies and procedures used in the settlement of students' accounts in cases where there are legitimate reasons why the enrolled students may not be able to complete the course with benefit to themselves. Also, show how the institution's cancellation and settlement policies meet the minimum requirements of the DETC Accrediting Commission.

Sample of Table for X. C. 4.

Course	Ref. Req.	Ref. Appr.	Ref. Denied	Days to Appr.	Days to Remit	# of Ref.

2. Explain how refunds to students are made within 30 days after date of request and where it is stated that a student may cancel "in any manner."

3. Explain how the institution handles a student who has paid in full but no longer wants to submit lessons for grading but wants all the materials.

4. For the 12 month period covered by enrollments and completions represented in your table of School and Course Data (Institutional Summary Profile), please compile a table listing these statistics for each course:

    a. Student requested refunds ("Ref. Req.")

    b. Number of refund requests approved by school ("Ref. Appr.")

    c. Number of refund requests denied by school ("Ref. Denied")

    d. Average days to approve refund request ("Days to Appr.")

    e. Average days to remit refund after request received ("Days to Remit")

    f. Total number of refunds remitted to students ("# of Ref.")

5. Show your refund schedule and how refunds are calculated. For example, what would be the refund due a student who had just completed the third assignment in a 12 assignment course? What about four assignments or five or six or none?

6. Highlight and show where the refund policy is stated on the enrollment agreement.

7. List all legal actions or other formal investigations initiated against the institution by students and/or any agencies during the last five years, because of refund or other financial issues, and indicate briefly the current status and/or disposition of each. Also list any legal actions initiated by the institution.

8. List any Federal Trade Commission, state, and/or other government investigations and/or actions taken against the institution in the past five years.

9. Provide dates, course, and current disposition of each action above.

10. State if the institution operates under any federal or state consent decrees and/or orders and/or voluntary assurances of compliance. Describe fully.

XI. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Summary of Standards: Institution has adequate facility, equipment, and record protection.

A. Plant and Equipment

Standard: *The building, workspace, and equipment comply with local fire, building, health, and safety regulations and are adequately equipped to handle the educational program of the institution.*

1. Provide a photograph of the exterior view of the institution, or indicate where such a photograph may be found in the supporting materials. (Please note: include in the SER clear driving directions to institution locations for use by members of the Examining Committee.)

2. Describe the type of construction, special features, and compliance with local fire, building, and occupational health and safety regulations.

3. Provide a basic floor plan indicating the occupant/activity in each area, and explain how workspace is satisfactory, hygienic, and safe.

4. Describe any special purpose equipment, first aid equipment, computers, records systems, or other technology used, and indicate which equipment is owned or leased.

B. Record Protection

Standard: *Educational records of all students are maintained in a safe, fireproof, and reasonably accessible place as long as they are likely to be needed. Other records are maintained in accordance with current educational, administrative, business, and legal practice.*

1. Describe the organization and management of the administrative office.

2. Describe how long student educational records are kept and how they are kept legible and accessible.

3. Describe the type of equipment used to protect vital records.

4. Explain how educational and financial records are maintained, stored, and retained.

5. Explain how the records are protected from vandalism, theft, damage, or fire.

XII. RESEARCH AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Summary of Standards: Institution conducts continuous research and self-improvement studies.

A. Research and Self-Improvement

Standard: *An accredited institution shows evidence of progressiveness and of effort to improve operating efficiency and service. Sound research procedures and techniques are used to measure how effectively the announced course objectives are being met.*

1. Describe any systematic research, evaluation, and quality controls carried on for institutional improvement.

2. Explain what research is conducted or what information is systematically collected.

3. Explain how the institution assesses the outcomes of its programs and services.

4. Describe any analytical studies of students in terms of their progress, characteristics, background, etc.

5. Submit any other material or data giving evidence of present efforts to extend and/or improve the institution.

6. Describe the institution's library.

B. Revision Practices

Standard: *Effective procedures are used to constantly improve materials and keep them current and up-to-date.*

1. Explain what procedures are in place to monitor course materials' currency and accuracy.

2. Explain how the quality of instruction, student service, and student satisfaction are evaluated.

3. Describe how the results of the evaluations are acted upon to improve course materials and services.

C. Professional Growth

Standard: *Interest in improving the course of instruction and in the upgrading of personnel and faculty is demonstrated through membership in professional associations, review and application of research, and practical experience in the general field of education and the specific field of correspondence/distance education.*

1. Describe professional organizations with which the staff is affiliated, and explain their involvement with each.

2. Explain how the staff is active in Distance Education and Training Council activities.

3. List the names of staff and the relevant professional meetings they have attended for the past two years.

4. State what training and self-development efforts are sponsored or are encouraged by institution management for the professional development of school staff.

5. Describe any in-house training programs for staff.

D. Self-Study Program

Standard: *An accredited institution has an established program or plan reflecting a desire to improve its services to students and to provide for the growth of the institution and its staff and faculty.*

1. State if the institution has a written plan or program for its short- and long-range development, improvement, or expansion of the curriculum or services to its staff and faculty. Include a copy of the plan or provide a summary of it.

2. Explain how the plan provides adequate and realistic growth of the institution and staff.

E. Summary of Institution Problems and Future Plans

1. As candidly as possible, describe the significant challenges currently facing the institution. State how the process of DETC self-evaluation has helped clarify/identify any major issues or problems.

2. Describe what plans have been developed for solving these problems.

3. Describe major institutional changes and improvements made since the last accreditation examination of the institution.

4. List, in order of importance, those innovations considered particularly worthy of notice by the Examining Committee.

5. Discuss in what ways the institution has contributed to the overall advancement and enhancement of the field of distance education and training.

6. State what problems, actions, or policies should be emphasized to the visiting evaluators as examples of significant institution achievements in quality distance education and training.

7. Explain what are the major strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

8. Describe any trends and/or patterns within the institution which demonstrate the overall quality of the institution.

9. Share any comments on the process of self-evaluation or accreditation the institution would care to offer, and list any suggestions for improvement.

10. List any additional questions for the Guide to Self-Evaluation that would help present the merits of the institution.

11. List/identify those questions which could be modified or deleted in the Guide.

Revised January 1996

Institutional Summary Profile

The *Institutional Summary Profile* must be included in the Self-Evaluation Report. It gives basic data and a general description about an institution, its programs, its mission and goals, and its acceptance of work.

Complete this profile of the institution and include it with the Self-Evaluation Report (immediately following the Table of Contents).

1. Institutional History

A. Trace a brief history of the institution showing the founding date, changes of name, creation of new divisions, new training sites, and any major changes in ownership and management.

B. Describe the history of major changes in the institution within the last five years with respect to the addition of student services, changes in admission standards, the addition of new personnel, changes in marketing procedures, etc.

C. Explain why each change came about.

2. Institutional Organization

A. Supply an organizational chart of the school showing the relationships among its component parts. Include names and titles of employees.

B. Describe other schools or institutions affiliated in any way with the institution or under the same organizational structure, management, or ownership. Include cooperative training programs or formal affiliations which exist with colleges, vocational schools, businesses, or other home study schools.

C. If external centers, enrollment offices, or training sites exist, describe in full and give their locations.

D. Describe fully any international distance study activities, affiliates, or divisions.

(continued)

(1.) Explain how and where exam services are rendered for these students.

(2.) List how many foreign students are enrolled annually.

3. Legal Form and Governance

A. Describe the legal form of the institution.

B. Provide the names and addresses, terms of office, and occupations of any governing board members.

C. Explain the authority of any agency, other than the governing board, which has power to initiate, review, or reverse actions of the school's management.

D. State the ownership of the institution.

E. If the institution is a stock corporation, list the names and addresses of any persons or organizations owning 10% or more of the voting stock.

4. Chartered Purpose/Mission

State the institution's (or the parent organization's and/or division's) purpose/mission as stated in its charter or other enabling instrument or legislation. Describe any organizational constraints imposed on the institution by virtue of its charter.

5. Institutional Goals

A. List the goals/objectives of the institution which should lead to the successful achievement of the institution's mission. Describe the process by which the organizational goals/objectives were developed (include names of those who participated in their development).

B. Describe how the organizational goals/objectives are evaluated and updated, and how frequently.

(continued)

C. Describe how the institutional goals are communicated to administrative staff, faculty, students, and to the public.

6. Approvals and Accreditations

A. Supply the names of any local, state, or other government or non-government agencies by which the institution is licensed, approved, or accredited. Give dates of license and/or first approval and subsequent re-approvals (provide documentation).

B. If the institution was ever **denied** approval or accreditation or had approval or accreditation withdrawn by an agency (including the DETC Accrediting Commission), give name of the agency, the dates of the action, and details.

7. School and Course/Program Data

Using institutional records, construct a table (see attached sample on page 5) that provides the data below for **each** distance education course/program offered by your institution:

a. title of course ("Title")

b. type of course (indicate if it's distance study [DS] or combination distance study-resident training [C-DS]) ("Type")

c. date (month, year) first student enrolled ("1st Enroll")

d. date course was last revised ("Lst. Revised")

e. number of new students enrolled in the last full calendar year ("New Stu.")

f. number of students completing course in the last full calendar year ("Stu. Complete")

g. number of school evaluated assignments, lessons, or examinations ("Graded")

(continued)

h. total clock hours typical enrollee must spend to complete the course ("Clock Hrs."). Explain in a footnote the method used to determine clock hours.

i. maximum number of months students are allowed for completing the course ("Max. to Comp.")

j. type of completion documents and credits awarded (e.g., diploma, certificate) ("Comp. Doc.")

k. total course price (tuition, fees, books, equipment, etc.) ("Price")

l. method of financing student tuition (by percentage) ("Financing"):

- cash basis (CB)
- school financing (SF)
- third-party financing (3rd)
- government financing (GF)
- other financing (OF) (explain in footnote)

m. indicate if course is eligible for special financing (e.g., G.I. Bill, DANTES, etc.) ("Spec. Prog. Fin.").

(Use Table 7 on page 5.)

Table 7 - Institutional Summary Profile

Title	Type	1st Enroll	Lst. Revised	New Stu.	Stu. Complete	Graded	Clock Hrs.	Max. to Comp.	Comp.Doc.	Price	Financing	Spec. Prog. Fin.
97												

B. Other Guides to Self-Evaluation

		# of Pages
1.	Guide to Change of Mission, Objectives, or Marketing Approach	1
2.	Guide to Change of Ownership	2
3.	Guide to Change of Location	1
4.	Guide to Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs	2
5.	Guide to Degree Programs	4
6.	Guide to Non-Private Institutions	3
7.	Guide to Five-Year Renewal	1
8.	Guide to Special Visit **[changed 1/96]**	1

1. Guide to Change of Mission, Objectives, or Marketing Approach

A significant alteration in the institution's established mission, objectives, or marketing practices may and often does signal a chain reaction of change throughout the institution. It almost certainly signals an effort to increase student enrollments and the consequent need to increase staff and facilities. It may signal a change in course objectives, course content, financing plan options, admission criteria, and other significant areas of operation in order to attract a greater number of students. It may change the numerous operating practices and it almost certainly affects advertising and promotion as well as control of sales representatives, if used.

For all of these reasons, the Accrediting Commission has a concern as to whether the character of the institution will be significantly changed and whether it will continue to be worthy of accreditation. The Commission may require a site visit, a self-evaluation, or both.

When a change in institution's mission, objectives, or marketing is undertaken, a special report must be prepared and submitted to the Accrediting Commission. In the report, particular attention should be given to these sections of the standards and their related sections and pages in the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix A:

Educational Objectives (pages 5-7)

Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff (pages 22-25)

Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements (pages 25-27)

Advertising and Promotional Literature/Control of Recruitment Personnel (pages 27-31)

Financial Responsibility (pages 31-32)

If other specific Guides to Self-Evaluation are applicable, these areas should also be addressed.

January 1995

2. Guide to Change of Ownership

When an accredited institution contemplates or begins negotiations to sell all or a majority interest in an accredited institution's ownership, the institution and/or prospective buyer should contact the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary will advise the prospective buyer of actions allowable within accreditation standards. If a final decision to "change ownership" is made, the accredited institution has the obligation to notify the Commission. An institution should never assume that accreditation of a program or an institution is automatically transferable. When the sale is effective, the new owner must take immediate steps to have accreditation re-affirmed. Failure to do so will result in automatic loss of accredited status. Before accreditation can be affirmed for any new owner, the Commission will order that a SER be developed and a site visit be made.

In preparing a self-evaluation in the case of change of ownership, the institution should complete all sections of the SER, continuously addressing the way in which the change of ownership will affect each. For example, in addressing "Objectives," the institution should explain if overall institutional objectives will change, whether individual course objectives will change, and the way in which such changes will be reflected throughout the educational and operational departments of the institution. In addressing advertising and promotion, for example, the institution should explain if it plans to use radio and TV ads instead of newspaper ads, if advertisements will be redesigned to focus on career opportunities as opposed to avocational pursuits, etc. In addition to reflecting the impact of a change of ownership, the institution should pay special attention to the following sections of these Standards and their related sections and page numbers in the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix A:

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff (pages 22-25)

Give particular emphasis on qualifications of the educational director and the chief administrator.

(continued)

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements (pages 25-27)

What changes are being made to admissions standards? Supply copies of new enrollment forms.

VIII. Advertising and Promotional Literature/Control of Recruitment Personnel (pages 27-31)

Will there be a change in marketing approach? If so, explain fully. How will sales representatives/recruitment personnel, if any, be controlled? What is the background of the head of marketing?

IX. Financial Responsibility (pages 31-32)

What is the financial impact of the change of ownership? What future impact is anticipated?

XI. Plant and Equipment (pages 36-37)

If school plans to expand, show how plant and equipment are adequate to accommodate this expansion.

XII. Research and Self-Improvement (pages 37-39)

What are the long-range plans for the institution respective to courses, facilities, and number of enrollees?

3. Guide to Change of Location

When an accredited institution contemplates a move to a new location, the institution must notify the Executive Secretary in writing. Before accreditation can be affirmed for the new institution location, the institution must submit six copies of a *Change of Location Report* to the Executive Secretary and a site visit must be made.

In preparing the *Change of Location Report*, the institution should follow the format outlined in the "Policy on Change of Location" (Appendix C. 4). In addition, the institution should pay special attention to the following sections of these Standards and their related sections and page numbers in the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix A:

IV. Student Services (pages 15-18)

Provide information on any changes in student services resulting from the relocation. Is the new location capable of maintaining the services to which students are accustomed?

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff (pages 22-25)

Report on changes that have been made to the institution's staff.

XI. Plant and Equipment (pages 36-37)

A. Plant and Equipment. Provide a picture, diagram, and floor plan of the facilities. Describe the type of construction, special features, and compliance with local fire, building, and occupational health and safety regulations. Provide a copy of the lease or deed for the site and any documents required by local officials for operating the institution at the new location.

B. Record Protection. Explain how records are maintained, protected, stored, and retained at the new location.

4. Guide to Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs

Only those institutions with resident training required as part of a program need respond to the questions below. These questions supplement and expand on the questions in sections of the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix A.

The institution should pay special attention to the following sections and page numbers of the Standards and the supplemental questions below:

I. Educational Objectives

A. Description of Objectives (pages 5-6). What provisions are made to ensure that students understand that mandatory completion of a resident training phase is necessary for successful completion of a course?

III. Educational Services

B. Resident Training (page 12). Describe how distance study and resident training are integrated and do not duplicate each other. What provisions are made to familiarize resident instructors with home study lesson coverage? How are distance study records or materials used by resident instructors and counselors? Are students permitted to complete distance study assignments during their resident training period? Why, and under what circumstances? Are resident training programs offered in conjunction with distance study lessons? Is the training optional or mandatory? At what point in their studies do students report for resident training? For resident training programs, provide data to complete this table: location of training site; names and qualifications of staff and faculty at each site; average number of students trained at site each year; length of training program; special equipment used at each site for training; and outline of the resident program of instruction at training site.

(continued)

IV. Student Services

C. Counseling and Employment Assistance (pages 16-18). Describe any counseling or employment assistance provided to resident students.

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements

A. Admission Practices (pages 25-26). What criteria must exist (tuition payments, academic achievements, etc.) before students are permitted to attend resident training?

VIII. Advertising and Promotional Literature/Control of Recruitment Personnel

A. Advertising and Promotion (pages 27-28). Provide copies of all promotional material, catalogs, and contracts describing resident training to students.

X. Tuition Policies, Collection Procedures, and Refunds (pages 32-36)

Describe tuition policies, student fund disbursements, refund policies, and methods of compensating students for travel or lodging relating to residency. Explain how the division of tuition payments between distance study and residential components was derived.When students fail to report for resident training, what refund policy applies?

XI. Plant and Equipment

A. Plant and Equipment (pages 36-37). For resident students, what are the facilities and provisions for student housing, feeding, health and sanitation, medical and liability insurance, and recreation? What standard operating procedures exist for: first aid; continuous monitoring, supervision, and inspection of student housing; contracts for motels/housing facilities; student transportation to and from training site; and student areas on or off the site?

5. Guide to Degree Programs

This guide provides Examining Committees and the Accrediting Commission information and documentation to support an institution's application for recognition of degree programs by distance study. In using this Guide, an institution should refer to Appendix C. 9, "Policy on Degree Programs."

Applicant institutions undergoing initial or five-year reviews should incorporate responses to the questions below into their overall SER, either as a separate supplement or integrated with the overall SER.

Accredited institutions applying for recognition of degree programs **between** five-year reviews should prepare a supplementary report to their most recent SER using this Guide. Copies of the SER should be submitted with this report. Out-of-date information and documentation in the SER should be updated to reflect the current picture at the institution.

If the institution offers more than one degree program, information and documentation must be provided for each program. The institution should pay special attention to the following sections of the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* and *Institutional Summary Profile* in Appendix A and the related Standards:

Institutional Summary Profile

1. **Institutional History (page 1).** Describe the history of the degree program offering. Why was the program developed? In what ways do the program's courses qualify as correspondence instruction? Explain how the correspondence method is an appropriate and valid vehicle for delivery of instruction leading to the specific degree offered.

6. **Approvals and Accreditation (page 3).** Is the institution licensed or approved to award degrees by correspondence by any state or other governmental body? Are degree programs accredited by any other recognized accrediting agency? Provide dates of approval and attach copies of approval certificates or letters. Has approval ever been denied or withdrawn for the degree program?

(continued)

7. **School and Course Data (pages 3-4).** Prepare and attach a chart describing each degree program offered by the institution using the following headings: (a) title of degree program; (b) number of school-evaluated assignments, lessons, or examinations; (c) total clock hours typical enrollee must spend to complete program; (d) months normally required to complete program; (e) maximum number of months students are allowed for completion of the program; (f) number of new students enrolled in first full calendar year; (g) number of students completing program in last calendar year; (h) title of degree awarded; (i) tuition for program.

Guide to Self-Evaluation

I. Educational Objectives

A. Description of Objectives (pages 5-6). Attach a copy of the overall program of instruction (curriculum) for the degree program. As a minimum, the program of instruction should describe subjects included, overall program objectives, sequence in which subjects are taught, amount of credit (if any) awarded for each subject, scope of coverage of each course/subject, and other areas one may wish to include.

II. Educational Materials

A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials (page 7). Explain and document how the degree program is clearly on the postsecondary level. List the overall educational objectives of the degree program, and document and explain how these objectives are equivalent to those imposed by resident institutions for the award of degrees of the same nature and level. Explain and provide evidence of how graduates of the program have mastered skills and knowledge equivalent to graduates of resident programs offering degrees similar in nature and level.

Identify and describe the analytical, communication, and quantitative skills which each degree program graduate is expected to have upon graduation. How are these skills taught or measured? What tests or evaluations are used to ascertain if each graduate has mastered them? Attach any validating or evaluation tests used.

(continued)

III. Educational Services

A. Examination Services (page 11). Describe the procedures for proctoring final examinations, and discuss the procedures used to assure that degree candidates have personally fulfilled degree program requirements. Submit copies of representative final examinations.

V. Student Success and Satisfaction

B. Progress Through the Course (pages 18-21). Select a random sample or records of students enrolled in the program. Prepare and submit a chart on student progress in accordance with the instructions in V. B.

Describe how the institution determines the extent to which stated objectives are achieved. How is the data used for quality control and improvement of the degree program? Give examples of how surveys of students, outside evaluations, comments from students and employers, and evaluations by institution staff are used to measure program outcomes and to assess the ability of the institution to meet its stated objectives for each degree program.

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff

A. Owners, Principals, and Executive Staff (pages 22-23). For school personnel managing or administering the degree program, give the name, position, and qualifications of the senior executive officers, the educational director, each academic dean, instructional department head, faculty member or instructor, editor, technical consultant, etc. For each indicate the (a) weekly hours of service rendered, (b) extent of formal education, (c) special training, (d) experience qualifying him or her for the position, (e) professional educational courses or degrees completed, (f) training in distance education, and (g) activity in trade and professional associations, and professional writing.

Submit copies of policy manuals that have been prepared for the guidance of the instructional staff. Describe the institution's organizational guides for faculty, and describe any faculty-development programs.

(continued)

Describe any use of outside faculty, consulting faculty, technical advisors, researchers, subject matter specialists, general consultants, or any other such individuals or groups. Provide for each the amount of and type of service rendered, the way the service is rendered, and the method of compensation given. Attach copies of contracts for such personnel.

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements

A. Admission Practices (pages 25-26). What are the academic and nonacademic requirements the applicant student must have for admission to the degree program? Describe the steps in the enrollment of the typical student. Describe the admissions prerequisites, procedures, and policies. Attach copies of all advertising and promotional literature, enrollment agreements, catalogs, and other material furnished to prospective students.

State the institution's policies and describe the procedures with respect to transfer and equivalent credit. In the school's most recent fiscal year, how many newly enrolled students were awarded transfer or equivalent credit, and what were typical amounts of such credit awarded? Attach sample student educational record forms, transcript forms, and other documents kept on file for students. Explain the validating procedure used, and attach sample copies of validating tests.

Attach a sample diploma. What evidence is there that the degree earned by graduates is accepted by other educational institutions, employers, governmental bodies, and the specific field or profession associated with the degree offered?

6. Guide to Non-Private Institutions

This guide is intended to help military, federal, and other non-private correspondence educators interpret selected questions found in the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* as they prepare their SER for submission to the Accrediting Commission. It also suggests useful exhibits that should accompany the SER.

The questions in the Guide were written primarily for private schools. Some of the questions are therefore not applicable to a non-private setting; some that **appear** not to be applicable can in fact be interpreted in a way to make them render a useful response.

This guide helps SER writers interpret sections so that they can prepare a more comprehensive report. The institution should pay special attention to the following sections of the *Institutional Summary Profile* and the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix A:

Institutional Summary Profile

2. **Institutional Organization (pages 1-2).** Supply the organization chart for the institute and a chart showing where it "fits" in higher commands. List names, titles, and commercial phone numbers of the key persons in the institute's chain of command, including those in superior command organizations.

   List any courses with American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations and the amount of credit suggested. Have the reports of the ACE evaluators available on site.

   Describe any OJT/dual track training systems, and outline a typical example of how it works in the field. Describe any distributed training or combination home study-resident courses.

   With which other educational institutes—civilian or military—do you cooperate? Describe how course offerings are developed to meet MOS needs and how the school works with other military entities in developing courses.

(continued)

Guide to Self-Evaluation

III. Educational Services

A. **Examination Services (page 11).** Provide examples of how examination service is personalized. Show sample letters to students, describe any telephone contact with students, or describe "on the job" personalization by a student's supervisor. How has the institute been able to overcome the impersonal nature of the large organization?

C. **Handling Student Inquiries (page 12).** Describe how student inquiries may be handled at the student's location. How has the institute created a "learning system" which encourages inquiry and interchange and personalized attention?

IV. Student Services

C. **Counseling and Employment Assistance (pages 16-18).** Supply copy of student newsletter or other publications for students.

V. Student Success and Satisfaction

A. **Student Success and Satisfaction (pages 18-19).** Describe the institute's system for collecting student evaluations. Show how student input is used in actual cases. How are courses revised in light of student input?

Give an example of how course completion can lead to job promotion. Describe any interfaces with promotion policies or any regulations which encourage course enrollment. What evidence is there that course completion leads to career enhancement? Give examples of promotion patterns.

Describe how graduates of the institute's courses can benefit society when they leave the service. What sample skills earned by correspondence are "translatable" in the civilian work place? For example, how has the institute made America a better place by providing highly trained technicians?

(continued)

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff

D. Instructors (pages 24-25). Supply numerical figures of authorized and on-hand civilian and military personnel, by department. Discuss any staffing priorities or difficulties through civilian staffing policies. What evidence exists of higher command support—both fiscal and philosophical—of the future of the institute?

VIII. Advertising and Promotional Literature/Control of Recruitment Personnel

A. Advertising and Promotion (pages 27-28). Describe the system in place for making the institute's services known to prospective students. Supply copies of regulations, sample posters, newsletters, etc., which announce course availability. Are recruiters, base education personnel, or training officers informed and a part of the institute's network?

IX. Financial Responsibility (pages 31-32)

Supply a copy of the institute's operating budget for the most recent two years. How is the budget formulated and by whom? Who in higher commands has authority to approve budgets? What percentage of the budget is devoted to course development?

XII. Research and Self-Improvement

A. Research and Self-Improvement (pages 37-38). Describe how public relations efforts, attendance at DETC meetings, preparation of distance study research, etc., have helped enhance the institute's image and the credibility of the service. How has the institute improved the distance study method?

B. Revision Practices (page 38). Given the large inventory of courses, describe the system in place for assuring that courses are revised on a timely basis.

7. Guide to Five-Year Renewal

For institutions applying for five-year renewal of accreditation, self-evaluation will be somewhat simpler than for the first-time applicant. The SER for renewal institutions should concentrate on the progress made and changes undertaken in the last five years. It should devote emphasis to those issues where it has in the past been vulnerable to weakness, as well as initiatives launched to correct previously cited deficiencies.

On the other hand, since the SER is intended to assist examiners who will visit the school as well as to facilitate the school's self-evaluation, **all** sections of the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* (in Appendix A) must be addressed. Particularly in those areas in which the SER calls for current data, the institution will need to present a current picture of itself, such as up-to-date financial data, staff resumes, and new advertising materials. Certainly in the case of significant changes in curriculum, sales approach, administration, etc., since the last visit, the institution will wish to be especially thorough in its SER.

While the initial SER should demonstrate how the institution plans to comply with standards for marketing, advertising, student enrollment contracts, and refunds, the five-year renewal SER should concentrate on demonstrating how the institution **is and has been** in compliance with these standards. For example, the SER writer will most certainly wish to review the last Chair's Report and give the Commission a status report on progress achieved in the five years since the last examination.

8. Guide to Special Visit

An institution preparing for a special visit will wish to follow the spirit and direction of the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix A giving extra attention to the areas of concern which have caused the visit. A special visit is one ordered by the Accrediting Commission because of unusual circumstances and occurs prior to the time when the next regular visit would have occurred.

The Commission requirement for a special visit is precipitated because of an unusually large number of student complaints, because of legal action taken against an institution, because of reported financial conditions, because of governmental complaints against the institution, or because of similar serious concerns. The institution's failure to agree to the visit will result in the institution's loss of accreditation.

Special visits, when ordered by the Accrediting Commission, will be conducted in a timely fashion. In no case will the time frame for reporting and conducting the visit extend beyond twelve months from the date the Commission is first made aware of any condition requiring a special visit. In rare cases, time extensions may be granted by the Commission, but only for good cause as determined by the Commission [added 1/96].

Because the institution is informed of the reason for the special visit, it will know the specific areas of the SER which should be given emphasis. By following the *Guide to the Self-Evaluation* and any other guide to self-evaluation for applicable cases, the institution should be able to anticipate and accommodate the material needed in the SER.

C. Special Policies

		# of Pages
1.	Policy Decisions for All Accredited Schools • Bankruptcy of Institutions • High School Diploma or its Equivalent • Franchises • Employment Office Solicitation • School Advertising • Use of the Term "Counselor" • Clock to Credit Hour Conversions	3
2.	Policy on Change of Mission, Objectives, or Marketing Approach	1
3.	Policy on Change of Ownership	1
4.	Policy on Change of Institution's Location	2
5.	Policy on Course Approval **[changed 1/97]**	4
6.	Policy on Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs	4
7.	Policy on Approval of New Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs	3
8.	Policy on New Training Sites	3
9.	Policy on Degree Programs **[changed 1/97]**	10
10.	Policy on Non-U.S. Institutions	2

1. Policy Decisions for All Accredited Schools

From time to time the Accrediting Commission adopts policies for accredited schools to fill special requirements and to define and clarify the Accreditation Standards.

These are policy decisions that currently apply to all institutions accredited by the Accrediting Commission:

Bankruptcy of Institutions

An accredited institution which involuntarily or voluntarily enters bankruptcy is in immediate violation of the Accrediting Commission's financial responsibility standard. This violation results in the school's automatic termination of accreditation. The bankrupt institution does not have the right of appeal or to request reconsideration before the Accrediting Commission. The institution will, however, be expected to abide by all requirements of the "Teach-Out Commitment," which it signed guaranteeing to teach-out students.

June 9, 1990
(Accreditation Standards IX A & B)

High School Diploma or its Equivalent

When offering a course to prepare a student for a vocation that requires a high school diploma for employment, accredited schools must require the student to have a high school diploma for admission to the course.

June 10, 1989
(Accreditation Standard VII A and Business Standard II B)

(continued)

Franchises

The Accrediting Commission will not accredit a distance education school or division with a franchise, distributorship, or similar sales arrangement.

November 4, 1966

The Accrediting Commission will not accredit a distance study school with a franchise, distributorship, or similar sales arrangement. The Accrediting Commission announced that while "independent contractors" may be used by schools on an *individual basis* in conformity with all of the Business Standards, the use of a separate layer of management organization such as a franchise or distributorship does not meet the intent of the standards.

January 6, 1989
(Accreditation Standard VIII B and Business Standard II C)

Employment Office Solicitation

The conduct of any face-to-face solicitation or promotional activities—including the in-person dissemination of literature or the providing of oral information—on the part of persons directly or indirectly affiliated with an accredited school at or in proximity to an employment or public welfare office will be considered a violation of Accreditation Standard VIII B and of DETC Business Standards I A 2, 6 and 7.

June 9, 1984
(Accreditation Standard VIII B and Business Standard II C)

School Advertising

The use of the phrase "No Salesman Will Call" by schools enrolling students by mail is not objectionable and may be used.

December 1, 1967
(Accreditation Standard VIII and Business Standard I A)

(continued)

Use of the Term "Counselor"

The use of the term "counselor" (referring to sales representatives not trained in counseling) in school promotional literature in this way is a violation of the Business Standard.

December 1, 1967
(Accreditation Standard VIII B and Business Standard II C 6)

Clock to Credit Hour Conversions

Correspondence courses approved to be offered by institutions accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council shall be measured in clock hours and/or the number of lesson assignment submissions. Only those courses which are a part of an academic degree program accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council or those which have been evaluated and received academic credit equivalency recommendation from the American Council on Education may be measured in credit.

January 7, 1988
(Accreditation Standards II A and Business Standards I A)

2. Policy on Change of Mission, Objectives, or Marketing Approach

The marketing approaches used by accredited institutions are varied. Some of the marketing strategies are:

- Direct advertising in newspapers, magazines, yellow pages, mail, etc. Leads from these sources are then approached by phone or mail.
- Poster advertising. Posters include "take one" cards which are completed by prospects. Leads are contacted by mail or phone with enrollment usually being made by a sales representative.
- Telemarketing in which prospects are called on the phone.
- Television advertising. TV ads may or may not use toll-free numbers so prospects can easily express interest. Follow-up is usually made through telemarketing.
- Use of sales representatives to make face-to-face contact and enroll.
- Other approaches or a combination of those listed above.

Likewise, a substantive change in institutional mission or objectives is a cause for Commission review.

Whenever an accredited institution contemplates making a substantive change to its established mission, objectives, or marketing approach, it has the obligation to notify the Commission in writing. Because its accreditation is predicated upon the institutional mission, objectives, and marketing approach reported at the time of its accreditation, the Commission will wish to consider if the changes being considered will change its decision. A full review of the situation may be required.

3. Policy on Change of Ownership

When an accredited institution contemplates a change of ownership, it is imperative that the Accrediting Commission be consulted. Accreditation does not automatically follow the institution when all or a major share of its interests are sold. If the new ownership wishes to continue the school's accreditation, it must advise the Commission before the change is made, and it must have its accreditation re-evaluated as an institution operating within the changes which a new owner may initiate.

When the sale is effective, the new owner must take immediate steps to have accreditation reaffirmed. Failure to do so will result in automatic loss of accreditation status. Before accreditation can be reaffirmed, the Commission will order that a report and site visit be made.

4. Policy on Change of Location

The Commission requires that, at all times, the building, work-space, and equipment of an accredited institution comply with the local fire, building, health, and safety requirements. When an institution decides to move to a new location, however close or far, it is necessary for an Examining Committee to visit the new site and for the Accrediting Commission to approve the new site. This policy applies when any previously approved location (headquarters or administrative offices) is affected. (When a training site is moved, refer to Appendix C. 8.)

When an institution relocates, the scope of the on-site visit is not necessarily limited to an evaluation of the physical facility but may encompass the institution's compliance with other standards.

In all cases:

1. When a move is contemplated to a new location, the school must notify the Executive Secretary in writing.

2. When the move is completed, the school must submit six copies of a Change of Location Report to the Executive Secretary. The report must be signed and dated by the institution's president and must include (but not be limited to) the following:

   A. The reason(s) for the relocation;

   B. Name, address, and telephone number of the site, plus a map with driving directions to the site from the hotel where the committee is staying and the nearest airport;

   C. Copy of the lease or deed for the site;

   D. A description of the new location which should include a picture, diagram, and floor plan of the facilities;

   E. Full information on the office equipment and record keeping storage system showing that the new location is capable of handling the administrative requirements and the educational program of the institution;

(continued)

F. A description of any changes in office equipment, staff, courses, or services;

G. Copy of an occupancy permit and other documents required by local officials for operating the institution at the new location; and

H. A description of any applicable evidence of compliance with fire codes.

3. A visit to the new location will take place at the earliest practical time.

5. Policy on Course Approval

Every distance study course offered by an accredited school must be reviewed and approved by the Accrediting Commission prior to **accepting enrollments [added 1/96]**. All courses offered by all distance study divisions and subsidiaries of an accredited school must be approved.

The Accrediting Commission of the DETC, as part of the accreditation procedure, conducts subject matter evaluations of distance study course materials in accordance with the following policies and procedures.

Schools Seeking Initial Accreditation

- **Two complete separate sets of each distance education course offering must be submitted to the Accrediting Commission prior to the date of the on-site examination. Generally speaking, two independent reviews are conducted for each course offered by the school [changed 1/97].**

Schools Seeking Re-accreditation

- **A school undergoing a re-accreditation examination will submit one complete set of each of its courses for review [changed 1/97].**

New and Revised Courses of Accredited Schools

1. Accredited schools developing new courses must submit the courses for review and approval in accordance with the following:

   A. One complete set of the course if the subject covered by the course is **closely related** to course areas already offered by the school.

   B. Two complete sets of the course if the subject covered by the course is **unrelated to** course areas already offered by the school.

2. Previously approved courses undergoing routine revisions or updating need not be submitted for review; one copy of courses undergoing **substantial, major revisions** (the addition of substantial amounts of new material and kits, major changes in course objectives, **substantial increases in the number of credit hours awarded, etc.) [added 1/97]** must be submitted for evaluation.

(continued)

3. In submitting new courses for approval, accredited schools may elect to submit less than a complete course ("draft editions") for initial evaluation. The material submitted shall consist of, as a minimum, the following: the outline for the full course; course and individual lesson objectives; draft copies of all advertising and promotional literature; copies of at least half the number of course lessons (at least **half** of which must be in "camera-ready" form, the balance of which may be in manuscript/draft form); and description of any supplementary materials and kits which will be used in the course. Upon the receipt of a favorable review(s), the school will be obligated to submit one complete set of the course including all kits and equipment prior to final Commission approval.

4. Once the Commission staff receives all of the subject specialist reports, the staff may give the institution **tentative** approval of any new or revised course. Final approval must be confirmed by action of the Accrediting Commission at its next meeting.

5. **If a course receives any "B" ratings, which means the course meets the standard, however, the subject specialist has suggestions on how the institution could enhance the course. The institution must reply in writing to any comments made by the subject specialist [changed 1/97].**

6. **If a course receives any "C" ratings, the "Course Does Not Meet the Standard" and cannot be approved at this time. The institution may exercise one of the following four options:**

   A. Make changes and re-submit

   B. Request new reviewer

   C. Send to a third evaluator

   D. Withdraw course

   See "Options for Course Receiving Any 'C' Ratings" in Appendix D [changed 1/97].

General

1. With the exceptions noted for submission of "draft editions" of new courses by accredited schools above, course materials must be submitted in accordance with the following procedures:

(continued)

A. Courses must be packaged separately with the outside of the shipping carton clearly labeled with the name of the school and title of the course.

B. For each course submitted, the following materials must be included:

- **letter of introduction (see sample on page 4) [added 1/96];**
- copies of all advertising, promotional literature and school catalog, even if in manuscript/draft form;
- enrollment agreement;
- examinations and examination solutions;
- **copies of the resume(s) of the principal faculty who will be instructing/servicing the course; and [added 1/96]**
- **copies of the resume(s) of the subject matter experts/ author(s) who prepared the materials [added 1/96].**

C. Each set of a course that is submitted must be accompanied by a complete set of tools, kits, equipment, audio-visual equipment, and aids that are provided **to students [added 1/96]** as a part of the course.

2. All course materials will be expended in the review and will not be returned to the school.

3. Accrediting Commission fees will be assessed for course reviews. All fees must be paid prior to Accrediting Commission consideration.

4. All **new or revised [added 1/97]** course approvals **of accredited institutions [added 1/97]** must be confirmed by action of the Accrediting Commission when it meets.

5. Subject matter specialist evaluators may be appointed to visit schools prior to the approval of a course. Subject specialists normally perform their evaluation of course materials prior to the on-site visit. As a general rule, they may accompany visiting teams if the course includes mandatory resident training for students, optional resident training, or if the school offers extensive or highly technical programs.

Revised January 1997

(continued)

Sample "Letter of Introduction" to Subject Specialist [added 1/96]

Letter of Introduction

Date: January 1, 199__

To: DETC Subject Specialist

From: John Doe Smith Institute (JDSI)

Subject: Introduction of new course in Child Day Care

Goal: The broad goal of this 18-lesson program is to train students for an entry level position in child day care. Child day care workers care for children in-home or at child day care centers while the children's parents are at work.

Needs Assessment: There is currently a high demand for child care and the high demand is expected to continue for years to come (see *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 199_*). JDSI's child day care program will provide knowledge-based training and instruction concerning the skills child day care workers use.

Target Market: The average person targeted for the Child Day Care course is a high school graduate, 18 to 25 years old. JDSI's programs aim to meet the needs of a niche targeted toward the low-priced, low-tech, high-involvement end of the market.

Cost: The costs of providing education are concentrated on well-written, proven text materials, carefully prepared lesson instructions and self-study exercises, and instructors who can provide meaningful feedback to students who need help in understanding the lessons. This course will sell for $600.

Course Development: When JDSI develops a course, we generally do so over the span of six or more months. All courses are built around new or existing textbooks from major publishers that have been proven effective in their field. Under the supervision of our Director of Education, a specialist is hired to develop the course. JDSI then uses a subject matter expert to review the course to verify the quality of the materials, appropriateness of the objectives, evaluation items and correctness of each answer.

Enclosures: Enclosed is the following information related to your review:

1. Summary of course objectives and features of the text;
2. Outline of lesson titles;
3. Resumes of the course author and the instructors;
4. Enrollment agreement;
5. Copies of all advertising, promotional literature and school catalog;
6. Examinations and answers; and
7. Entire course (100% of all lessons and kits) as the student will receive it.

Questions: Any questions you have should be directed to Susan Reilly at the Accrediting Commission offices in Washington, D.C., who in turn will contact us if any follow-up is necessary.

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6. Policy on Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs

When the fulfillment of the objectives of a course calls for the learning of certain manual skills, familiarity with specialized equipment, or the application of certain techniques under professional supervision, the Accrediting Commission may require the school to provide such learning experiences as a mandatory part of the course.

The Accrediting Commission will accept an application from an institution offering combination distance study-resident training programs if the **predominant** component (i.e., 51% or more of the total program as measured by the time the "average student" takes to complete) of the course is offered by correspondence instruction and if the following conditions are met. These conditions do not apply to programs where resident training courses or sessions are offered as an option.

I. Advertising and Promotion

A. The school's advertising and promotional activities must make it clear to prospective students that the program is a combination course including both home study and resident training and the completion of both phases is required for successful completion of the course.

B. The tuition for distance study and resident training must be separately stated on the enrollment contract.

C. The tuition must be fairly distributed for each portion of the course.

II. Course Structure and Materials

A. To enroll, the student must sign an agreement which includes both the home study and resident training. The student must also be informed, prior to enrollment, of the nature, special costs, location, availability, and pertinent conditions for attendance of the resident training phase.

(continued)

B. The distance study phase of the training must constitute the predominant part of the program. It will normally precede the resident phase and must provide meaningful information the learning of which is necessary for the accomplishment of the course objective. The student must be offered the opportunity to attend resident training within **60 days** after having completed the prerequisite distance study phase of the training, unless the date for the resident training is specified in the enrollment contract.

C. The distance study phase must include a course of instruction which constitutes a significant, valid, and structured portion of the overall training. As a minimum, written, printed, or recorded study units must be sent to the student, the student must complete examinations or assignments which are submitted to the school for evaluation and comment, and the school must return these to the student in time for him or her to benefit from the evaluation and comment as he or she pursues his or her studies.

D. The resident training phase must be adjunctive or supplemental to the distance study training. It should not duplicate the distance study training but should make it necessary for the student to draw from the knowledge learned in the distance study phase if he or she is to successfully complete the program. Resident instructors should be familiar with the distance study program and present instruction in such a way as to make both phases an integrated unit.

III. Site/School

A. The classrooms, buildings, and other physical facilities must be in compliance with all local, city, and state fire codes. The state educational authority document must be available and current at the time of the visit.

B. The sanitary facilities of the school must be adequate for both male and female students and must be in compliance with local, city, and state regulations.

C. The school must have adequate equipment and procedures to provide for safety actions with regard to fire, injury to students, and handling of hazardous products.

(continued)

D. First aid materials and supplies must be sufficient and adequate. On-site staff must be trained in first aid and CPR procedures.

E. The school must maintain adequate levels of liability, accident, and other insurance for protection of its students in resident training.

F. Copies of proof of ownership documents (leases and/or deeds) for equipment and property must be available. **All** of the necessary equipment for training should be available at the time of the examination visit.

G. Appropriate fire evacuation plans and exit signs should be posted conspicuously in classrooms and student areas.

IV. Faculty

A. The school should have educational standards and qualifications for the hiring of resident training instructors.

B. Site directors and resident instructors must be qualified for their positions.

C. Resident instructors should make effective use of the student's experiences in the distance study component. The resident instruction should not duplicate material covered in the distance study lessons.

D. Records of the student's academic progress must be maintained for both the distance study and resident phases of the program. The home study record should be available to resident faculty members, and it should be used as a teaching and counseling resource.

E. If a resident Program Of Instruction (POI) is offered by the school, the combination program instructors should observe such instruction.

F. Class lesson plans should be substantive and comprehensive enough to meet the objectives set forth in the POI and actually used by the instructors.

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V. On-Site Student Services

A. The school's placement assistance program should demonstrate a satisfactory placement rate. It should keep records, based on follow-up, of employment obtained.

B. The school should have housing arrangements for resident students which are safe, accessible to the school, and appropriate for the kind of student enrolled. Food services should also be readily available.

C. Other student services such as break areas, student lounges, and dining facilities should be clean and comfortable.

D. Study areas or reference libraries should be available to the students on-site.

E. Academic and personal counseling should be available and appropriate for students in the resident portion of their combination program.

VI. Tuition Allocation

Tuition charges must be fairly distributed for each portion of a combination distance study-resident course. "Front end loading" of tuition in which a disproportionately large share of tuition is allocated to the distance study component works to the disadvantage of the vast majority of students, who, without resident training, have little to show for the debt they incur. The Commission does not approve tuition rates for schools, but it does look to see that tuition is allocated fairly between distance study and resident components.

7. Policy on Approval of New Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs

This policy is an extension of the Accrediting Commission's procedures for the subject specialist review of new or revised courses and its policy for approval of resident training sites established by accredited schools.

1. When an accredited institution proposes to offer a new combination distance study and resident course, it must notify the Executive Secretary in writing, disclose its intention, and provide the home study course material for evaluation in accordance with the Commission's "Policy on Course Approval" (Appendix C. 5).

2. Students may not be enrolled in the course until approval for the home study course has been extended and until the resident training site has been evaluated and approved in accordance with the Commission's "Policy on New Training Sites," (Appendix C. 8) except as provided for below.

3. If a school wishes to have approval to begin enrolling students in the **distance study** portion of the course **prior to** having an evaluation of the resident training site, it must submit the following to the Executive Secretary:

   A. Written notification of intent to secure approval under number 1 above.

   B. Two complete sets of the home study course, packaged in accordance with the Commission's "Policy on Course Approval" (Appendix C. 5).

   C. Three copies of a Resident Training Plan, which must include:

      1. Projected date for start of first resident class (month and date).

      2. Proposed marketing strategy and methods.

      3. Proposed location of the site (city and state).

      4. Estimate of months the average enrollee should take to complete the distance education course.

(continued)

5. Estimate of time the average enrollee should take to complete the resident course.

6. Statement of the learning goals for both distance education and resident portions of the course.

7. Program of instruction (class schedule) which outlines titles of class sessions, anticipated class loads, student/instructor ratios, and an hour-by-hour descriptive schedule of activities.

8. Proposed enrollment agreement, catalog, and advertising copy.

9. Admission standards.

10. Description and number of pieces of resident training equipment, texts, and office equipment.

11. Proposed organizational chart for resident site, plus outline of faculty and staff duties and position qualifications.

12. General description of proposed resident facility, including estimates of space requirements, floor plan, classroom and site layout, etc.

13. List of audio-visual teaching equipment and instructional material which will serve the needs of the residential program.

14. Explanation of plans for retention of student records.

15. Description of counseling services to be available to students at the site.

16. Description of placement services to be available to students at the site.

17. Description of provisions for housing of students.

D. If the subject specialist evaluation of the course and the resident training plan is given a favorable review, approval can be extended to the school to begin enrollment of students in the course. No

(continued)

later than 90 days before the proposed start date for resident training, the school must submit a complete Training Site Report (TSR) to the Accrediting Commission. Upon receipt of the TSR, the Executive Secretary will schedule a review of the site. The on-site visitation will use the procedures described in the Accrediting Commission's "Policy on New Training Sites" (Appendix C. 8): i.e., six copies of a TSR and one set of the home study course (for on-site school specialist's use).

E. If for any reason the school: (1) fails to submit its TSR as required in 3. D above; (2) fails to undergo or refuses the on-site visit; or (3) fails to receive a favorable on-site review report, enrollments in the course must be immediately suspended and the school must automatically refund within 30 days all money received from students. If the resident training site is subsequently approved, previously enrolled distance study students will be afforded the opportunity to resume and complete their distance study courses and must be afforded the opportunity to attend resident training, within 60 days of completing their distance study training, free of charge.

8. Policy on New Training Sites

This procedure is a part of the Accrediting Commission's "Policy on Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs" (Appendix C. 6). All new sites must be visited and individually approved by the Accrediting Commission **before** students may be trained there. Failure by the accredited institution to notify the Commission in a timely way of new training site may bring a full review of the entire institution

1. An accredited institution planning to establish a training site or planning to move an approved training site to a different location must notify the Executive Secretary in writing in advance of the new site's activation. A site cannot be advertised until the Executive Secretary acknowledges receipt of the school's notification and a schedule for a review of the site has been set.

2. The on-site review of the new site by an examining committee will take place at the earliest practical time after notification. The committee will include at least one subject matter specialist for each subject taught.

3. In preparation for the on-site visit, the institution must submit six copies of a Training Site Report (TSR) and one copy of the distance study (pre-training) course. The TSR must be signed by the school's president.

4. The TSR must include (but not be limited to) the following:

   A. Name, address, and telephone number of the site, plus a map with driving directions to the site from the nearest airport and/or the hotel where the committee will be staying (check with the Commission staff).

   B. Copy of the lease or deed for the site.

   C. A statement about: (1) why the new site is being opened; (2) the expected impact on the school's overall mission (how the site will support mission); (3) how management of, and communications with, the site will be handled; and (4) the rationale for the location of the site.

(continued)

D. Copy of course catalogs, enrollment agreement, and advertising and promotional materials.

E. A Program of Instruction (POI) for each training program given at the site, plus information on anticipated class loads.

F. A list of full- and part-time personnel at the site, including resumes outlining qualifications, time spent each week at the site, and job descriptions.

G. Name, model number, and brief description of all training equipment and the number of students and length of time each student will train with each piece of equipment during the session.

H. Copies of proof of ownership or lease agreements for training equipment.

I. Copies of maintenance procedures, schedules, and contracts for equipment.

J. Evidence of insurance coverages, safety equipment, first aid availability, etc., at the site.

K. A diagram or plat of the training area and a list and description of outside facilities or routes provided at or from the site.

L. A copy of required state and local approval documents, e.g., licenses, permits, etc. Approval for a site cannot be extended until formal evidence of final state approval, if applicable, has been received.

M. A description of how student records are maintained, used, and safeguarded at the site.

N. A description and list of student housing facilities (or arrangements), food service, sanitation, parking, and other student support services.

O. A description of academic support services, placement services, academic counseling, and other services offered at the site.

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P. Student-to-faculty ratios for classroom, lab, field, and other modes of instruction.

5. Accrediting visitation fees must be paid prior to the visit.

6. The institution will receive a copy of the Report of the Chair of the Examining Committee and will be given the opportunity to comment on its factual elements in accordance with normal Commission procedures. The established procedure for the training site approval is: (1) receipt of Chair's Report in the Commission's office; (2) transmittal of Chair's Report to institution; (3) written acknowledgment from the Chief Executive Officer that the institution agrees with the findings and will comply with all recommendations in the Chair's Report*; and (4) a written letter of training site approval or disapproval is sent to the institution from the Commission's office.

   ***Exceptions:** Following the on-site review of a new training site of an accredited school, the normal procedures for acting on examining committee reports will be observed by the Accrediting Commission with the exceptions below:

   - If the Chair's Report on the new training site is **favorable** to the institution, the Executive Secretary is authorized to notify the institution that the site has interim approval. This approval is subject to receipt of the institution's written statement that it agrees to the findings and will comply with the recommendations in the Chair's Report, and agrees that the interim approval is subject to the final review and action by the Accrediting Commission at its next meeting.

   - If the Chair's Report is **negative,** the new training site may not be used for the training of students until the Accrediting Commission acts to approve the site at its next meeting or until the institution makes changes which are verified by a second and favorable examining committee. A negative report might be the result of the absence of required documentation or if the Chair raises questions of a substantive nature about the quality of the institution's program, services, or facilities.

January 1995

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9. Policy on Degree Programs

The Accrediting Commission of the DETC accredits degree programs offered by accredited distance study institutions. This accreditation is inclusive of and consistent with the overall institutional accreditation granted by the Commission to non-degree-offering distance study institutions. This document sets forth the scope of accrediting activity and the requirements which a distance study institution must meet to receive accreditation for its degree programs. It interprets Accrediting Commission standards and policies for accreditation and procedures for distance study institutions offering degree programs.

The Accrediting Commission reviews only programs which have generally accepted and understood objectives and which are offered entirely or primarily through distance study instruction.

I. Objectives

The Accrediting Commission of the DETC seeks to remain responsive to the ever-changing nature of the distance education field. Further, it encourages institutional innovation to allow the educational needs of more students to be met through the unique method of distance study. The Commission encourages experimental and innovative programs to the extent that these are conceived and implemented in a manner which assures the quality and integrity of the institution and the program. The Commission also seeks to provide an avenue of institutional, national accreditation to those institutions which do not otherwise have access to nationally recognized accreditation.

II. Scope of Activity

The scope of the Commission's degree recognition activity includes all degrees offered by private and non-private distance study institutions.

All degree programs offered by the institution, as well as all other non-degree distance study programs, must be reviewed and approved by the Accrediting Commission. All of the distance study divisions, courses, and subsidiaries of the institution offering correspondence instruction must be accredited.

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III. Eligibility

A. Distance Study or Correspondence Institution

The institution seeking accreditation for its degree programs must qualify as a distance study or correspondence institution under the definition established by the Accrediting Commission (see page 17 of the *DETC Accreditation Handbook*). This is an institution which teaches formally enrolled students through the exchange of written material and examinations or structured educational materials such as videotapes, recordings, or other training devices. Such institutions maintain complete student records, retain qualified faculty, and provide student services.

B. Accreditation of All Programs

The institution must apply to the Accrediting Commission for accreditation of the institution and for **all** its distance education programs (degree and non-degree) or its non-degree correspondence programs must already be accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the DETC.

To qualify for accreditation, each distance study institution which offers programs leading to the award of degrees must be found to be in compliance with the standards for accredited institutions as well as the requirements set forth in this policy statement.

C. Licensure

The institution must have a charter, license, or formal authority from the appropriate governmental body to award degrees by distance study instruction if such authority is available or required.

D. Level of Program

The degree programs offered must clearly be on the postsecondary level. The minimum requirements for the award of degrees must be the achievement of educational objectives equivalent to those imposed by accredited resident institutions for the award of degrees of the same nature and level.

Associate Degree: For the Associate Degree, there shall be a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. Of these total

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credits required, there shall be a minimum of 15 semester hours, or their equivalent, in general education courses. General education courses include courses other than those in areas of concentration and provide adequate instruction in analytical, communicative, and quantitative skills with due allowances for the nature of the subject and the objectives of the specific degree offered. "Semester" and "quarter" hours shall be equivalent to the commonly-accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement in accredited institutions.

The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards in effect at other accredited postsecondary institutions offering Associate Degrees with due allowance for meeting special objectives. Instructional procedures, texts, and materials shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of accredited postsecondary degree-awarding institutions offering similar programs.

Baccalaureate Degree: For the Baccalaureate Degree, the institution must require the completion of a minimum of 120 semester hours, 180 quarter hours, or their equivalent. Of the total credits required for the Baccalaureate Degree, there shall be at least 30 standard semester hours, or their equivalent, in general education courses. General education courses include subjects other than those within the areas of professional concentration and give balance to the total program.

Courses that satisfy the subject matter and those that satisfy the general education requirement should be specifically indicated. Institutions must determine the specific courses that are advanced courses requiring prerequisite or foundation courses.

The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards in effect at other accredited postsecondary institutions offering Baccalaureate Degrees with due allowance for special objectives of the degree offered on the customs and constraints imposed by the state or nation of domicile. Instructional procedures, texts, and materials shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of accredited postsecondary degree-awarding institutions offering similar programs.

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Master's Degree: For the Master's Degree, the institution must require the completion of a minimum of 36 semester hours, 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent.

The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards in effect at other accredited postsecondary institutions offering Master's Degrees with due allowance for special objectives of the degree offered on the customs and constraints imposed by the state or nation of domicile. Instructional procedures, texts, and materials shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of accredited postsecondary degree-awarding institutions offering similar graduate degree programs.

E. Period of Successful Operation

New applicant institutions must have at least one academic degree program in which students have been enrolled for a minimum of two years. New applicant institutions (and institutions offering degree programs undergoing re-accreditation reviews) must have in place an on-going program to assess student success with respect to the stated degree program outcomes and must demonstrate how this on-going program has been used to enhance degree offerings and services.

F. Educational Method

The predominant mode (i.e., more than half of the instructional program) of delivering instruction leading to the degree must be distance education. External independent study or other non-resident programs which do not make predominant use of distance study method of instruction are not eligible.

IV. Program Requirements

A. Resident Study

The degree must be of such a nature that it can be achieved through distance education or a combination of distance education and residential study. Mandatory residential instruction must supplement the distance education program whenever it is necessary to attain the stated program objectives. In such cases, the

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institution must disclose to the prospective student that the program is a combination of distance education and residential instruction and that completion of both is a requirement for the award of the degree.

B. Resident Degree Comparability

Graduates of distance education degree programs must exhibit skill and knowledge attainment through the demonstrated mastery of educational objectives equivalent to accredited resident degree programs which are similar in nature and level.

C. Proctored Examinations

Adequate steps must be taken by the institution to assure that the degree candidate has personally fulfilled the degree requirements stipulated by the institution.

The student's achievement shall be assessed by proctored final comprehensive examinations appropriately spaced throughout the program of study. The proctor shall be the institution or a reputable third party. The process for conducting proctored examinations shall be clear and completely stated by the institution. The process shall assure that the degree candidate who takes the proctored examination is in fact the same person who enrolled in the prescribed program and that examination results will reflect the student's own knowledge and competence in accordance with stated educational objectives.

D. Qualifications for Admission

1. Undergraduate Degree Programs

The admissions policy shall conform to the institution's mission, shall be publicly stated, and shall be administered as written. A student accepted for enrollment in a degree program must normally[1] be in possession of a high school diploma or its equivalent. The institution must determine with reasonable certainty, prior to the acceptance of the enrollment, that the applicant has the appro-

[1] Refer to *DETC Business Standards* II B 5 (Appendix F) for exceptional cases.

(continued)

priate prior education required to succeed in a degree program. The institution should take reasonable measures to assure that the student has no physical limitation which will prevent success in the program contemplated. Such measures may be: 1) the publication of a clear description of physical handicaps which could prevent successful completion; 2) the inclusion of an appropriate question or questions on the admission application which will alert the institution to a potential problem and which would trigger further action by the institution; and 3) the requirements of a doctor's statement in questionable cases.

Institutions shall maintain adequate documentation of the secondary school diploma or its equivalent to verify the student's qualification for admission to the program.

2. Master's Degree Programs

A threshold[2] admission requirement to a Master's program is based on the possession of a Baccalaureate Degree from an institution accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of Education or an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) [changed 1/1/97]** (formerly the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation) or, for non-U.S. institutions, an educational institution approved by equivalent authorities.

E. Transfer and Equivalent Credit

Transfer credit toward a degree may be awarded for postsecondary courses completed by the student at other institutions if such courses are found to meet the standards of the accepting institution and the requirements of the specific program. **Transfer credit must be from an institution accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of Education or an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (formerly the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation) or, for non-U.S. institutions, an educational institution approved by equivalent authorities [added 1/1/97].** Credit may also be given for adequately validated experiential equivalent learning of a postsecondary

[2] Refer to *DETC Business Standards* II B 5 (Appendix F) for exceptional cases.

(continued)

nature. Examples are credit for business experience, college level equivalent tests, achievement in a related profession, military training, or other postsecondary level equivalent experience.

A maximum of one-half of the credits required for associate or master's degrees may be given through transfer credit or a combination of transfer credit and experiential or equivalent credit. For baccalaureate degrees, a maximum of three-fourths of the credits required may be awarded for transfer credit. For no student, however, may the credit given for experiential or equivalent learning exceed one-fourth of the credits required for a degree.

For both transfer credit and equivalent credit purposes, adequate validating procedures must be clearly stated and published, and these procedures must be consistently applied by the institution.

The institution should give special attention to and consider awarding appropriate amounts of academic credit for credits earned by applicants at institutions accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council. For all transfer credit decisions, official documentation, including original transcripts, must be maintained.

V. Advertising Requirements

The institution must clearly indicate and affirmatively disclose in its advertisements, promotional materials, enrollment forms, descriptive literature, and other media, that the degree program being offered is based solely or primarily on distance study or home study/correspondence instruction. The institution must have a catalog readily available to students, prospective students, and other members of the interested public. The catalog must contain and accurately depict, at a minimum, the following:

A. The institutional mission and objectives.

B. Names and titles of administrators of the institution.

C. The legal control, names of trustees, directors, and/or officers of the corporation.

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D. A general statement of accredited status and governmental approvals.

E. List of full-time and part-time faculty, listed separately, with degrees held and conferring institutions, in area of teaching specialization.

F. Academic calendar for combination programs or any programs which operate on a fixed calendar.

G. Institution's admission policy for each specific degree offered, i.e., Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's, etc.

H. Statement of curriculums offered including curriculum objective, courses included, credit allowed, total credits required, requirements for certification, and licensing as appropriate.

I. A concise course description for each course offered.

J. Explanation of grading system.

K. Testing procedures. Proctored examination procedures, if any.

L. Graduation requirements, including minimum passing grades.

M. Statement of fees, tuition, and all regular and special charges for each program.

N. Statement of refund policy which conforms to the DETC Business Standards.

O. Description of counseling and/or placement services available to students, if any.

Note: The institution should include on the front cover or title page of the catalog the year or years for which the catalog is effective.

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff

For this standard, faculty are considered to be those who present instruction, prepare instructional material, evaluate assignments,

(continued)

and counsel students in academic selection and progress. Faculty are assumed to have full responsibility for the academic program and student progress.

The educational director as well as all members of the instructional staff must possess academic qualifications of unquestionable merit. There should be on staff a sufficient number of instructional faculty proportionate to the level of student enrollment to give the degree program(s) long-term stability and academic credibility. In judging competence of faculty, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor **and their comparability to faculty of accredited resident institutions [added 1/97].** Specifically:

A. **Associate Degree Program:** For teaching of those subjects which are a part of the Associate Degree program, faculty members shall possess, at a minimum, an **Baccalaureate [changed 1/97]** Degree or demonstrated expertise in the Associate Degree discipline in the subject field. Instructors teaching general education courses shall have their degree in the assigned teaching field or have a **Baccalaureate [changed 1/97]** degree and **18 [changed 1/97]** semester hours in the teaching discipline. Instructors teaching in technical fields must possess, at a minimum, a **Baccalaureate [changed 1/97]** Degree in the assigned teaching field. **Preferably, a number of the faculty should possess a graduate degree [added 1/97].**

B. **Baccalaureate Degree Program:** For teaching of those subjects which are a part of the Baccalaureate Degree program, faculty members must possess, at a minimum, a **Master's [changed 1/97]** degree in the assigned teaching field or a **Master's [changed 1/97]** degree constructive to the program being offered. **Preferably, a number of the faculty should possess a terminal degree [added 1/97].**

C. **Master's Degree Program:** The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the level of enrollment. All Master's program faculty should have a graduate degree constructive to the program being offered (**most of the [changed 1/97]** faculty

(continued)

should possess a terminal degree). Instructors shall be assigned responsibilities in terms of their major and minor areas of expertise.

It is expected that all degree-awarding institutions will be in compliance with these standards assuming reasonable preparation time.

In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation. Such cases must be justified by the institution on an individual basis. The institution must document and justify the academic and professional preparation of faculty members teaching in their programs [added 1/97].

VII. Library-Media Services Facilities Access

The institution shall make provisions for the students and faculty to have **access** to facilities for library-media services that are appropriate in meeting the objectives of the degree programs. Such access may be provided at a distance or through arrangements with local institutions or through personalized guidance to individual students. Any institution-based media service/library program should systematically and regularly be evaluated to ensure it is meeting the needs of its users and supporting the programs and objectives of the institution.

Access to a collection of professional educational materials should be provided for faculty and administrators to keep abreast of trends, developments, techniques, research, and experimentation. A variety of educational materials must be selected, acquired, organized, and maintained to help fulfill the institution's mission and support the educational program(s). The collection should support all the programs offered at the institution. Standard reference works, periodicals, and manuals must be provided to facilitate the educational and program mission of the institution.

Faculty and instructional supervisory personnel must be involved in the selection of resources. New course offerings and increases in student enrollment should be reflected in added allocations of resources for ensuring student access to these media services.

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10. Policy on Non-U.S. Institutions

This policy is for applicants for accreditation located outside the United States.

1. A large proportion of the school's courses and materials must be in English to give the English speaking examiners and the Accrediting Commission a comprehensive understanding of the school and its programs.

2. Extensive pre-application and visitation contacts between the school and the DETC staff are required to assure a full understanding of standards and procedures and to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments. Such contacts should be made through exchanges of correspondence, telephone conversations, and in face-to-face meetings. Reasonable expenses for such contacts will be paid by the school.

3. In a cover letter submitted with the *Application for Accreditation* (see Appendix G. 1), the applicant should:

   A. describe how accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the DETC will be of benefit to the school and to its students;

   B. explain how accreditation will be used; and

   C. commit that the school head and/or key personnel will actively participate in Council affairs if the school is accredited.

4. Students enrolled by the school will be surveyed using the established survey procedure.

5. The school will be evaluated using the Standards of the Accrediting Commission. The DETC Business Standards will be applied on an item-by-item basis with due regard to the national laws and regulations applicable to the applicant. The specified number of copies of a full self-evaluation report must be provided to the Executive Secretary at least three months prior to the date set for the on-site visit.

6. If the school believes that any accreditation standard should be waived or interpreted in a special way, the burden of substantiating this belief

(continued)

is placed on the applicant. The school must express such beliefs in correspondence prior to the on-site visit and provide the substantiating arguments in its self-evaluation report.

7. The on-site review committee will consist of at least three evaluators and the Accrediting Commission Observer. The normal course review policy (i.e., two sets of course materials submitted to the Commission) will be followed. In certain cases a subject specialist will accompany the on-site committee.

8. When possible, an educator from the school's geographic area will be included as an examining committee member.

9. Insofar as possible, an individual from the appropriate national government regulatory body will be invited to observe the accreditation process. The process must remain independent of any government review procedures, however, and the voluntary, non-governmental nature of accreditation must be preserved.

10. The school will pay the actual cost of the review including travel expenses of the visiting committee, fees for course reviews, and honoraria plus a 15% administrative fee. The applicant will be sent an estimated fee which must be paid (in U.S. funds) prior to the visit. Adjustments will be made following the visit.

D. Rating Forms

		# of Pages
1.	Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions **[changed 1/96]**	33
	• Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form **[changed 1/96]**	1
2.	Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists	
	• Overview to Subject Specialists **[changed 1/96]**	1
	• Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists **[changed 1/96]**	8
	• Summary of Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists **[changed 1/96]**	1
	• Options for Course Receiving any "C" Ratings	1
3.	Examiner's Rating Form for Change of Location	3
4.	Examiner's Rating Form for Degree Programs	4
5.	Examiner's Rating Form for Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs	5
6.	Examiner's Rating Form for Non-U.S. Institutions	2

Examiner's Rating Form

for All Institutions

Name of Institution:_____ Date Visited:_____

Name of Evaluator:_____ Position on Committee: _____

Examining Committee Chair:_____ Date Report due to Chair:_____

The questions on this Examiner's Rating Form will assist you in determining if the institution meets each of the twelve Standards for Accreditation. Please note that you are asked to answer "Yes" or "No" for each question. At the end of each section, you are asked if the institution meets the standard overall. Any "No" ratings in "Meets ____ Standard overall" **must be explained in an attached note.**

Evaluators and subject reviewers are not limited by the questions on this form. You are encouraged to explore any related characteristics and activities. Certain of the standards are of special importance to each individual evaluator and subject specialist:

1. **Educational and Degree Evaluators** should use all of Sections I through VII and Section XII.

2. **Subject Specialists** should use all of Sections I and II and Section III. A. Subject specialists who accompany the visiting Examining Committee should also use Sections III, IV, V and VI.

3. **Business Standards Evaluators** should use all of Sections VII through XII.

When addressing some of the standards (i.e., objectives, educational materials, etc.), you should indicate whether you are evaluating one course, an entire program, or the whole institution. Special rating forms are used for institutions offering degrees, combination distance study-resident training programs, and when an institution is located outside the United States. Consult *DETC Accreditation Handbook,* Appendix C and D for the appropriate policies and rating forms.

Attach to the *Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form* a narrative commentary expanding on or explaining any "No" ratings. Only the *Summary Rating Form* (with attached comments) are submitted to the Chair of the Committee and the Accrediting Commission office.

I. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Summary of Standards: Institution has reasonably attainable and clearly stated educational objectives.

A. Description of Objectives

Standard: *Educational objectives are clearly defined and simply stated. They indicate what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students. The character, nature, quality, value, and source of the instruction and educational service are set forth in language understood by the types of students enrolled. If a course prepares for an occupation or field of occupations, the objectives clearly state the types of occupations for which preparation is given.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Are the educational objectives of each course or program offered by the institution (what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students) simply stated and understandable to the institution's enrollees?
___	___	2. Are the institution's advertisements and promotional literature consistent with course objectives?
___	___	3. Is the occupation for which the course prepares students referenced in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* of the U.S. Department of Labor or other similar references?
___	___	4. Do the course objectives indicate the type of student for whom the instruction is intended?
___	___	5. Do the course objectives indicate the kind of education or training offered and the expected outcomes, in terms of skills, knowledge, licenses, or degrees which graduates will possess?
___	___	6. Is the relationship between institutional mission and the needs of the public served adequately?
___	___	7. Is there evidence that advertised or implied employment opportunities will be available for graduates in each program?
___	___	8. For vocational courses, did the institution provide adequate information showing employer acceptance of graduates?

____ ____ 9. If a degree-granting institution, are the minimum educational objectives comparable to those of accredited resident institutions for the award of degrees of the same nature and level?

____ ____ **Meets Standard I.A. overall.**

B. Appropriate Objectives

Standard: *The objectives of the institution must be* ***reasonably attainable and be [added 1/96]*** *of such a nature that they can be achieved through distance study.* ***For non-credit courses, the learning objectives must, where appropriate to the nature and type of the course, be comparable to similar non-credit courses offered in traditional institutions [added 1/96].*** *Appropriate objectives include the development of skills, the provision of job-related training, the imparting of information, the training in the application of knowledge, and the development of desirable habits and attitudes. Evaluation of the educational program is based on the announced course objectives and the success with which the objectives are fulfilled.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Is the process adequate by which the objectives are determined or revised for the institution and for courses?

____ ____ 2. Are objectives kept up-to-date, and is the way in which the institution's officials interact with other communities adequate to keep the institution and course objectives current?

____ ____ 3. Are objectives achievable through the correspondence/distance study method, and are the outcome assessment measurements appropriate?

____ ____ 4. For vocational courses, do the course objectives meet the employment needs in the market?

____ ____ 5. Is the method for determining course outcomes assessment adequate, and is it used for quality control and improvement of courses and educational services?

____ ____ 6. Are other methods adequately used to assess the success of the institution in meeting its overall institutional objectives and to continually upgrade services and courses?

____ ____ 7. Is the predominant form of instruction correspondence/distance study?

___ ___ 8. If this is an institution offering a combination program, is residential study used adequately to supplement the overall correspondence method?

___ ___ **9. Are the learning objectives for non-credit courses comparable to similiar non-credit courses offered in traditional institutions? [added 1/96]**

___ ___ **Meets Standard I.B. overall.**

II. EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Summary of Standards: Institution offers educationally sound and up-to-date courses.

A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials

Standard: *Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the announced objectives.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Will students who complete the course learn enough to achieve the announced course objectives?

___ ___ 2. Do the instructional materials have sufficient depth and comprehension for the student to master the subject?

___ ___ 3. Do the instructional materials allow students to meet their employment objectives?

___ ___ **Meets Standard II.A. overall.**

B. Up-to-date Instructional Materials

Standard: *Instructional materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are the course materials up-to-date and accurate, reflecting "state-of-the-art" knowledge and practices?

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____ ____ 2. Is the procedure for revising courses adequate, and how often are the courses revised?

____ ____ 3. Is the procedure for correcting errors in course materials in between regularly scheduled revisions adequate?

____ ____ **Meets Standard II.B. overall.**

C. Authorship

Standard: *Instructional materials are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by correspondence educators skilled in preparing materials for correspondence/ distance study use.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. If standard textbooks are used, did the institution list titles, authors, publishers, and copyright dates in their SER?

____ ____ 2. Are the qualifications of the authors adequate, and are texts suitable for distance study use?

____ ____ 3. Were study guides appropriately prepared for use with standard texts?

____ ____ 4. If outside authors prepared materials specifically for the institution, are they qualified to do so?

____ ____ 5. Are the qualifications of any outside educational consultants adequate?

____ ____ 6. Are subject matter experts and faculty adequately involved in writing or revising learning materials?

____ ____ **Meets Standard II.C. overall.**

D. Reading Level

Standard: *The reading difficulty of the instructional materials is keyed to the reading competence of enrollees in the course.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Are the results of the most recent readability tests or checks adequate, and were the tests conducted properly?
___	___	2. Is the reading level of instructional material keyed to the reading competence of the average enrollee?
___	___	3. Are students who possess only the minimum admission requirements able to comprehend the materials and successfully complete the course?
___	___	**Meets Standard II.D. overall.**

E. Study Instructions

Standard: *Suitable instructions on how to study the course clearly indicate to the students what to do and how to learn effectively.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Are instructions to students on how to proceed and how to study the course adequate, clearly written, and easy to understand?
___	___	2. Is the institution-initiated guidance or remediation given to students proceeding through the course sufficient?
___	___	**Meets Standard II.E. overall.**

F. Organization of Instructional Materials

Standard: *The organization and presentation of the instructional materials are in accord with sound, psychological principles of learning.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Does the organization and presentation of the subject matter in the courses adequately accommodate the principles of modern learning psychology?

____ ____ 2. Are students required to submit every assignment and receive a minimum grade in order to graduate?

____ ____ **Meets Standard II.F. overall.**

G. Teaching Devices

Standard: *Instructional programs make effective use of appropriate teaching devices and supplemental instructional aids.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Are necessary learning and training devices used?

____ ____ 2. Do the devices enhance instruction and improve motivation?

____ ____ 3. Are the devices properly integrated with texts and lesson assignments?

____ ____ 4. Are any institutional policies relating to the release of kits to students or any tuition payment policies affecting kits or equipment properly stated and located where the students can easily review them?

____ ____ 5. Are adequate instructional materials supplied to the student at all times?

____ ____ 6. Did the institution provide copies of lesson shipment schedules?

____ ____ 7. Do students who pay for the entire course in advance receive all instructional materials upon request even though they choose to terminate their studies?

____ ____ **Meets Standard II.G. overall.**

H. Illustrations

Standard: *Illustrations are used intelligently, and they have educational and/or inspirational value.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Do illustrations, graphs, and drawings have educational or motivational value?

___ ___ 2. Do the illustrations enhance the course presentation and contribute to the attainment of course objectives or inspire students to achieve?

___ ___ **Meets Standard II.H. overall.**

I. Printing and Binding

Standard: *Instructional materials are legibly reproduced, well-manufactured, suitably bound, and attractive in layout and format.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Does the reproduction and binding processes used for texts adequately enhance the educational function of the course?

___ ___ 2. Are adequate efforts made to maintain overall quality of the printing, binding, and packaging of course materials?

___ ___ 3. Are procedures used to create effective audio or video tapes, CD-ROM, diskettes, and other non-print media adequate?

___ ___ **Meets Standard II.I. overall.**

III. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Summary of Standards: Institution provides satisfactory educational services.

A. Examination Services

Standard: *The submission of examinations which adequately cover the materials is required. Adequate evaluation, correction services, and necessary counseling by an instructor are provided for examinations.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are the types of test items selected appropriate for what they are designed to measure?

___ ___ 2. Are methods used for submitting exams appropriate?

___ ___ 3. If any oral or nonwritten evaluations are used, do they properly measure the student's mastery of the material?

___ ___ 4. Do the exams and assignments measure the achievement of announced objectives?

___ ___ 5. Are tests adequately checked for validity and reliability?

___ ___ 6. Are there proper safeguards for protecting test answers and, when required, proctoring of examinations?

___ ___ 7. Are the number and length of examinations adequate to determine if sufficient student mastery of course objectives has taken place?

___ ___ **Meets Standard III.A. overall.**

B. Resident Training

Standard: *Resident training should supplement the correspondence/distance education course whenever it is necessary to attain the stated educational objectives.*

Note: If you provide resident training as a supplement to correspondence/distance education, also answer questions in the "Guide for Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs," found in Appendix B.4, and review the "Examiner's Rating Form for Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs" found in Appendix D. 5.

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are the objectives of the resident program appropriate?

___ ___ 2. Does the resident program constitute the appropriate percentage of the total program?

___ ___ 3. Is the point where a student enters the resident program appropriate?

___ ___ 4. Does the institution teach enough resident programs to service the students?

___ ___ **Meets Standard III.B. overall.**

C. Handling Student Inquiries

Standard: *Relevant inquiries from students are welcome and are answered promptly and satisfactorily with due regard for any legal and professional restrictions.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Is the process for handling student inquiries adequate and prompt?
___	___	2. Are the educational and academic qualifications of persons handling inquiries adequate?
___	___	3. Is the average time it takes to respond to a student's inquiry concerning course content adequate?
___	___	4. Does a review of student files indicate prompt and effective responses to student queries concerning administrative requests?
___	___	5. Does the institution encourage and facilitate student inquiries?
___	___	**Meets Standard III.C. overall.**

D. Individual Differences

Standard: *Adequate provisions are made to meet the individual differences of students and to provide counseling and guidance as required to assist students to attain their educational goals.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Does the institution provide an adequate advisory service for students having difficulty with the materials, and is the service for rapid learners adequate?
___	___	2. Are adequate efforts made by instructors to provide remedial training to students experiencing difficulty?
___	___	**Meets Standard III.D. overall.**

E. Handling Failures

Standard: *Students who fail to do satisfactory work are encouraged to continue until they either show inability to do satisfactory work or until they demonstrate satisfactory progress.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Does the institution have an adequate process for handling students who fail to do satisfactory work?

____ ____ 2. Is there an adequate procedure for students to re-submit failed assignments?

____ ____ 3. Does the institution have an appropriate written policy on handling student failure of a course and academic dismissal?

____ ____ 4. In the most recent year, were the number of students disenrolled or dismissed for academic or other reasons consistent with the nature of the courses and the size of the institution?

____ ____ **Meets Standard III.E. overall.**

F. Encouragement of Students

Standard: *A constructive program is followed to encourage students to start, continue, and finish the courses in which they have enrolled.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Does the institution have and use a constructive program to encourage students to start, continue, and finish the courses in which they are enrolled?

____ ____ 2. Are the students' records adequately and frequently checked, and is an effective lesson tracking system used?

___ ___ 3. Is there evidence of telephone calls, letters, and other actions intended to encourage students?

___ ___ 4. Are efforts to encourage academic progress separate from efforts for the collection of delinquent tuition?

___ ___ **Meets Standard III.F. overall.**

G. Student Evaluation of Courses

Standard: Reactions of students are sought as one basis for evaluating and improving instructional materials and services.

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are there adequate ways in which reactions of students are sought as a basis for evaluating and improving instructional materials and services?

___ ___ 2. Are students adequately asked about the availability of academic help, the encouragement to continue studying, the quality of educational materials, the level of difficulty, and the pace of the course?

___ ___ 3. Are end-of-course critique forms used adequately?

___ ___ 4. Is there any provision for using student comments for course revisions?

___ ___ 5. Are revision files adequately maintained to ensure currency of educational materials or accuracy of information?

___ ___ 6. Are the reactions of students properly used to effect changes in educational materials and services, and do the assessment efforts result in changes made to courses or services?

___ ___ **Meets Standard III.G. overall.**

H. Appropriate Technology

Standard: The institution uses appropriate technology in the process of enhancing educational services [added 1/96].

Yes	No	
____	____	**1. Does the institution use appropriate technology in order to enhance educational services? [added 1/96]**
____	____	**2. Does the institution have an overall plan for using or adopting new technology? [added 1/96]**
____	____	**3. Does the institution acknowledge—and have plans to overcome—any weaknesses in its use of appropriate technology? [added 1/96]**
____	____	**Meets Standard III.H. overall.**

IV. STUDENT SERVICES

Summary of Standards: Institution offers adequate student services.

A. Grading of Examinations

Standards: *Minimum student services include prompt return of accurately graded examinations.*

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Does the staff evaluate, correct, service, and grade submitted assignments adequately and accurately?
____	____	2. Are adequate controls in place to ensure the accuracy of grading and evaluation services?
____	____	3. Are lessons graded and returned to students promptly?
____	____	4. Is the institution's system adequate for controlling the receipt and tracking of exams and for assuring their prompt return to the student?
____	____	5. Is there proper assistance provided to students who do poorly on tests?
____	____	6. Are the staff who evaluate assignments qualified in the appropriate fields, and do they interact with students?

___ ___ 7. Do the staff who evaluate the assignments provide references to incorrect answers?

___ ___ 8. Are students' academic questions on lesson assignments referred to people qualified in the subject field for review and comment?

___ ___ **Meets Standard IV.A. overall.**

B. Student Records and Materials

Standard: *Ample study materials should be provided at all times to students. Essential student records should be adequately maintained.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are adequate formal records kept on students and graduates and for a sufficient period of time?

___ ___ 2. Does the institution keep adequate records of receipt, grading, and return of exams?

___ ___ 3. Does the institution have adequate procedures for the maintenance and protection of student records?

___ ___ 4. Are the computer systems used by the institution—including "back-up computer file" procedures—adequate to maintain student records?

___ ___ 5. Are transcript services and the design and format for transcripts adequate?

___ ___ 6. Are completion certificates or diplomas awarded by the proper authorities?

___ ___ 7. Are adequate institution inventories of texts, kits, and other materials maintained at all times?

___ ___ **Meets Standard IV.B. overall.**

C. Counseling and Employment Assistance

Standard: *Competent counseling should be available to students on request. If employment assistance and other services for alumni are offered, they should be as described.*

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Is the institution's program to offer employment-related counseling to students and alumni adequate?
____	____	2. Do the majority of students find jobs working in occupations related to the training provided?
____	____	3. Does the institution offer adequate services for their alumni?
____	____	4. Does the institution keep records of job assistance or placement successes?
____	____	5. Do institution promotional efforts avoid "guaranteeing" job placement?
____	____	6. Does the institution adequately fulfill any stated or implied job placement services promised to students?
____	____	7. Does the institution properly advertise its use of job placement?
____	____	8. Does the institution properly follow-up on the placement of its graduates?
____	____	**Meets Standard IV.C. overall.**

V. STUDENT SUCCESS AND SATISFACTION

Summary of Standards: Institution has demonstrated ample student success and satisfaction.

A. Student Success and Learning Outcomes [changed 1/96]

Standard: The institution can show that a high proportion of students are satisfied with the training and educational services provided [changed 1/96].

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Does the institution routinely measure student success and satisfaction and the outcomes of its course offerings?
____	____	2. Did the institution adequately demonstrate with sample student, employer, or graduate comments that the students are satisfied with the course, as well as with the educational services?

___ ___ 3. Are student complaint files properly kept, that is, are the complaints adequately categorized, investigated, and resolved?

___ ___ **Meets Standard V.A. overall.**

B. Progress Through the Course(s)

Standard: The institution can demonstrate that [added 1/96] *a satisfactory percentage of enrolled students start the course, continue their studies, and finish. A sample check of the students in* ***the institution [changed 1/96]*** *must indicate a reasonable achievement in, and completion of, their course and satisfaction with the services which the institution is rendering.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are the non-start, drop-out, and completion rates satisfactory in light of the nature of the course, the student body, and similar DETC accredited distance education programs?

___ ___ 2. Have studies on student lesson completions been established on a continuing basis?

___ ___ 3. Have these studies been used effectively to improve courses and services?

___ ___ **Meets Standard V.B. overall.**

C. Achievement of Learning Objectives and Benefits [added 1/96]

Standard: The institution has in place an ongoing procedure that can demonstrate that a satisfactory percentage of graduates: (1) have attained the learning objectives established for the course; and (2) have been successful in achieving the benefits established for the course [added 1/96].

Yes No

___ ___ **1. Is the institute's ongoing procedure for assessing outcomes of graduates adequate? [added 1/96]**

___ ___ **2. Is the percentage of graduates who attained the learning objectives established by the course adequate? [added 1/96]**

___ ___ **3. Is the percentage of graduates who have been successful in achieving the benefits established for the course adequate? [added 1/96]**

___ ___ **4. Can the institution document satisfactorily that it delivers on its promises made to students? [added 1/96]**

___ ___ **Meets Standard V.C. overall.**

VI. QUALIFICATIONS OF PRINCIPALS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Summary of Standards: Institution has competent administrators, faculty, and staff.

A. Owners, Principals, and Executive Staff

Standard: *The institution's owners, principals, officers, and managers possess sound reputations and can show a record of integrity and ethical conduct in their business relations. The Chief Executive Officer and top school administrators possess appropriate backgrounds, qualifications, and experience for their positions and have demonstrated the ability to direct school operations successfully.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Does the background, past experience, and reputation for integrity of the senior executive officers qualify them for their positions?

___ ___ 2. Do other top administrators possess appropriate qualifications, and have they demonstrated ability to direct school operations ethically and successfully?

___ ___ 3. Does the executive staff have experience in distance/correspondence education methodology, as well as administrative experiences?

___ ___ 4. Have any senior officials held previous educational administrative positions?

___ ___ **Meets Standard VI.A. overall.**

B. Educational Director

Standard: *A qualified person serves as the educational director. The educational director has overall administrative responsibilities for the educational program and a policy-making voice in advertising, sales, and collections.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Does the educational director have appropriate educational qualifications and experience?

___ ___ 2. Does the educational director have adequate responsibilities for the educational program?

___ ___ 3. Is the educational director involved in policy development, advertising, sales, and collection activities?

___ ___ **Meets Standard VI.B. overall.**

C. Department Heads

Standard: *In large institutions, department heads or other qualified persons are delegated educational, editorial, and research responsibilities within the subject fields.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. If there are department heads, do they meet academic and administrative qualifications?

___ ___ 2. Did the institution provide the requested information?

___ ___ 3. Are the department heads involved in a continuous upgrading of educational materials, equipment, and services?

___ ___ **Meets Standard VI.C. overall.**

D. Instructors

Standard: *The institution has a sufficient number of qualified instructors to give individualized instructional service to each student.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are instructors adequately qualified in the subjects they teach?

___ ___ 2. Do instructors assist in developing and updating course materials?

___ ___ 3. Are faculty adequately used in the distance study portion of courses, i.e., exam grading, telephone consultation with students, academic counseling, course revision, development of study guides, etc.?

___ ___ 4. Are outside or part-time faculty, if any, properly supervised?

___ ___ 5. Are there an adequate number of qualified instructors for the number of active students?

___ ___ 6. Are outside faculty, consulting faculty, technical advisors, researchers, subject matter specialists, general consultants, or other such individuals retained by the institution qualified?

___ ___ 7. Can the institution provide proof of any contractual arrangements with outside individuals or groups, the amount and type of service rendered, and the method of compensation given?

___ ___ 8. Are stated policies of employment criteria for staff and faculty adequate?

___ ___ 9. Are policy manuals that have been prepared for the guidance of instructional staff adequate?

___ ___ 10. Are the institution's guidelines for staff development and tuition assistance programs adequate?

___ ___ 11. Are faculty properly evaluated for job performance?

___ ___ **Meets Standard VI.D. overall.**

VII. ADMISSION PRACTICES AND ENROLLMENT AGREEMENTS

Summary of Standards: Institution carefully screens students for admission.

A. Admission Practices

Standard: The admissions practices of the institution fully conform to the provisions of DETC Business Standard II B [changed 1/96].

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Are student admission requirements appropriate and acceptable for the type of course offered?
___	___	2. Is the appropriate information collected for each student?
___	___	3. Is the institution's admissions policy for students still in high school or students within compulsory school age appropriate?
___	___	4. Does the institution explain how it determines its policy requiring a specific education level and how it handles exceptions to this policy?
___	___	5. Are educational qualifications properly documented?
___	___	6. In admitting students, does the institution fully observe the rights of all students, and commit no action which would be detrimental to the applicant because of race, sex, color, or national origin?
___	___	7. Are the institution's policies and procedures used in evaluating previous academic work of students adequate, and do the policies permit students to receive credit for previous studies or work experience?
___	___	8. Is there evidence that students who meet the minimum admission standards can achieve the announced objectives of the course?
___	___	9. Are admissions criteria in accord with advertising statements and promotional literature for the course?
___	___	10. Is the procedure for who determines the acceptance standards and final acceptance in marginal cases adequate?
___	___	11. Is the institution's admissions policy consistently and uniformly applied?
___	___	12. Are applicants and students usually rejected by the institution for reasons other than lack of money or interest?
___	___	13. Does the institution have adequate policies and procedures for informing prospective students of any requirements for governmental or other licensing procedures that are directly or indirectly applicable?
___	___	**Meets Standard VII.A. overall.**

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B. Enrollment Agreements (Contracts)

Standard: *The written agreement and/or other written documents left with the student specify clearly the nature and scope of the course, the services and obligations to which the institution is committed, and the privileges and obligations, financial and otherwise, of the student. Any changes in tuition, procedures, or rates must be made applicable to all future enrollees.* ***The institution must use a written enrollment agreement that conforms to the provisions of DETC Business Standards II A and II B [added 1/96].***

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Does the institution use an enrollment agreement (contract) which clearly outlines the obligations of both the institution and the student?
____	____	2. Are affirmation forms, telephone verification scripts, or other forms used to process student applications or contracts appropriate?
____	____	3. Are the procedures for transmitting a copy of a contract to a student and for handling any down payments adequate?
____	____	4. When an enrollment is obtained by a sales representative, is a receipt for money collected left with the applicant?
____	____	5. As printed on the enrollment agreement, is the cancellation and settlement policy in conformance with the DETC *Business Standards?*
____	____	**Meets Standard VII.B. overall.**

VIII. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE/CONTROL OF RECRUITMENT PERSONNEL [changed 1/96]

Summary of Standards: Institution advertises its courses truthfully and has adequate control of its recruitment personnel.

A. Advertising and Promotion

Standard: All advertising, promotional or recruitment activities of the institution fully conform to DETC Business Standard I A [changed 1/96].

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Does all literature preclude giving any false, misleading, or exaggerated impression with respect to the institution, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates?
___	___	2. Do testimonials of endorsement, commendation, or recommendation used in the institution's advertisements and promotional literature portray currently correct conditions and facts?
___	___	3. Are referrals properly sought from students?
___	___	4. Are discounts, premiums, or cash awards made to individuals who refer other prospective students consistent with the *DETC Business Standards?*
___	___	5. Is there someone responsible for ensuring that all advertising is consistent, true, and representative of the institution's course objectives and admission requirements?
___	___	6. If sales representatives/agents are permitted to place advertising which they develop, are there adequate procedures used to ensure compliance with applicable business standards and regulations?
___	___	7. If outside advertising agencies are retained, is the advertising copy properly reviewed and controlled by the institution?
___	___	8. Do advertisements and promotional material make it clear that "education" or "training," not employment, is being offered? Do advertisements appearing in classified sections of newspapers appear in columns headed "education," "schools," or "instruction" and not in "help wanted," "career opportunity," "employment," or "business opportunity" columns?
___	___	9. Can the institution demonstrate the availability of jobs which it mentions in its literature? Do actual placement figures compare with claims made in recent promotional literature?
___	___	10. Does the institution refer to its accreditation in the precise language specified in the DETC Business Standards? Does the institution make available the name, address and telephone number of the Distance Education and Training Council?

____ ____ 11. Are the advertising and budget figures appropriate?

____ ____ 12. Does all advertising and promotional literature include the full and correct name and location of the institution and disclose the fact that home study training or education is given?

____ ____ **Meets Standard VIII.A. overall.**

B. Control of Recruitment Personnel [changed 1/96]

Standard: The institution's policies and practices in the hiring, training, monitoring, and managing of all sales or recruiting personnel fully conform to DETC Business Standard II C [changed 1/96].

(This section is intended for use by institutions with recruitment personnel, sales representatives, agents, telemarketers, or any other person or service whose role is to recruit students with or without compensation by the institution.)

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Are adequate direct mail, telemarketing, or marketing methods used?

____ ____ 2. Are appropriate and required screening and selection procedures used when recruiting sales representatives?

____ ____ 3. Does the institution have an adequate training program for its sales representatives and does the program meet all DETC requirements?

____ ____ 4. If outside agencies or people are used to solicit prospective students, are they properly trained and supervised?

____ ____ 5. Are complete and accurate records kept on each sales representative?

____ ____ 6. Has the institution studied and kept records on school trends in compensation levels, turnover, supervisory ratio, number of complaints arising from agent discharge, etc.?

____ ____ 7. Does the sales representative's written agreement with the institution spell out all the rights and provisions of both the institution and the sales representative, and does it meet DETC standards?

___ ___ 8. Are all sales representatives properly licensed and bonded as required by the states?

___ ___ 9. Are sales personnel properly informed of and kept up-to-date on changing federal and state laws?

___ ___ 10. Are all the structures of compensation carefully explained to the prospective job applicant?

___ ___ 11. If sales supervisors are used, are the number of such supervisors and the number of persons whom they manage appropriate?

___ ___ 12. Is the ethical conduct of sales representatives properly monitored?

___ ___ 13. Are accurate records kept concerning sales representatives?

___ ___ 14. Are current sales manuals provided to sales representatives and are letters and bulletins furnished for their guidance?

___ ___ 15. Is there an adequate training program for newly employed sales personnel?

___ ___ 16. Are the policies and procedures used adequately to monitor and control actions of sales personnel?

___ ___ 17. Is there evidence that sales representatives clearly understand and take seriously the Code of Ethics for Sales Representatives of the DETC?

___ ___ 18. Is the percent of turnover for the sales force in the institution's past two years and the average length of service for sales personnel disproportional?

___ ___ **Meets Standard VIII.B. overall.**

IX. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Summary of Standards: Institution is financially able to deliver high quality educational services.

A. Financial Practices

Standard:** The institution shows, **by complete, comparative financial statements covering its

two most recent fiscal years [changed 1/96], *that it is financially responsible and that it can meet its financial obligations to provide service to its students. (Financial statements must be prepared "in conformity and generally accepted accounting principles.")*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Do the institution's financial statements demonstrate overall financial responsibility?
___	___	a. Are the financial statements complete?
___	___	b. Are all notes and supplementary schedules to statements included?
___	___	c. Do the statements include an income statement, balance sheet, statement of cash flows, and explanatory notes?
___	___	d. Did the institution provide detailed operating statements for institution divisions?
___	___	e. Are the statements prepared using the accrual method of accounting?
___	___	2. Did the institution submit a properly executed copy of the appropriate Teach-Out Commitment form?
___	___	3. Is an adequate budget-making process used by the institution?
___	___	4. Are current assets sufficient to meet current liabilities?
___	___	5. Are the reserves honoring future obligations and bad debts accurate and adequate?
___	___	6. Do the accounts payable (numbers, amounts, and age) reflect sound financial responsibility and management?
___	___	7. Are inventories of course materials adequate for current and future servicing requirements?
___	___	8. Does the institution have adequate insurance coverage, and is it properly allocated?

___ ___ 9. For an institution with resident training program(s), is there adequate liability coverage for students at resident training sites?

___ ___ **Meets Standard IX.A. overall.**

B. Demonstrated Operation

Standard: First time applicant institutions can document continuous sound and ethical operations in all respects. Applicant institutions must document two continuous years of sound and ethical operation as a bona fide distance education institution [changed 1/96].

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Has the institution demonstrated sound financial responsibility and ethical operation for the preceding two years?

___ ___ 2. Can the institution document that it has operated continuously as a bona fide distance education institution for the most recent two year period?

___ ___ **Meets Standard IX.B. overall.**

X. TUITION POLICIES, COLLECTION PROCEDURES, AND REFUNDS

Summary of Standards: Institution has fair and equitable tuition and refund policies.

A. Tuition Policies (An institution which does not charge tuition need not complete this section.)

Standard: *Tuition policies are in keeping with the provisions of the DETC Business Standard Section III A.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Is the course price the same for all persons at a given time (except for allowable discounts)?

___ ___ 2. Do price discounts have a published termination date?

___ ___ 3. Are aptitude tests and contests properly administered?

____ ____ 4. Are scholarship programs properly funded, and are recipients fairly selected?

____ ____ **Meets Standard X.A. overall.**

B. Tuition Collection Procedures

Standard: *Tuition collection practices and procedures are fair. They encourage the progress of students and seek to retain their good will. The right to protect its financial interests is inherent with any accredited institution. Its tuition collection practices are in keeping with sound and ethical business standards.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Are tuition collection procedures fair and in keeping with sound, ethical practice?

____ ____ 2. Do the collection notices, forms, and telephone scripts used by outside collection agencies conform to ethical business practices?

____ ____ 3. Do collection practices encourage the student to proceed with the course?

____ ____ 4. Did the institution provide a set of all statements and collection letters used by the institution?

____ ____ 5. If outside collection agencies are used, is the percentage of accounts turned over to such agencies reasonable?

____ ____ 6. Were the names and addresses of each agency provided, and did the institution describe the contractual arrangements and procedures used?

____ ____ 7. Did the institution provide a complete set of forms and collection letters used by each agency?

____ ____ 8. Does the institution provide written ethical standards to any outside agencies?

____ ____ 9. Does the institution properly monitor the outside agency's adherence to these standards?

____ ____ **Meets Standard X.B. overall.**

C. Tuition Refund Policies

Standard: *The institution recognizes that there are legitimate reasons why enrolled students may not be able to complete their training with benefit to themselves. Accordingly, the school has a policy for equitable tuition adjustment in such cases. Records are maintained on tuition refunds and enrollment cancellations to provide a reference source for management analysis.*

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Does the institution's cancellation and settlement policy meet the minimum requirements of the Accrediting Commission?
___	___	2. Are students provided refunds within 30 days after the date of request, and are students permitted to cancel "in any manner," including orally?
___	___	3. Does the institution permit students who have paid in full to receive all course material even though they no longer wish to submit lessons for grading?
___	___	4. Does the institution maintain a refund file?
___	___	5. Do student records contain the methods of how refund amounts are calculated, and are the refunds calculated correctly?
___	___	6. Is the refund policy properly stated on the student's copy of the enrollment agreement?
___	___	7. Are there any legal actions or other formal investigations that have been initiated against the institution by students or any agencies during the last five years?
___	___	8. Are there any Federal Trade Commission, state, or other government actions taken against the institution?
___	___	9. If so, did the institution provide the dates, course, and current disposition of each action?
___	___	10. Does the institution operate under any federal or state consent decrees or orders or voluntary assurances of compliance?
___	___	**Meets Standard X.C. overall.**

XI. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Summary of Standards: Institution has adequate facility, equipment, and record protection.

A. Plant and Equipment

Standard: *The building, workspace, and equipment comply with local fire, building, health, and safety regulations and are adequately equipped to handle the educational program of the institution.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Does the institution's plant conform with any photos provided students in advertising or sales materials?

____ ____ 2. Does the institution comply with all applicable local, fire, building, and occupational health and safety requirements?

____ ____ 3. Are the conditions and amount of workspace satisfactory, hygienic, and safe?

____ ____ 4. Does the institution have adequate technical equipment (data processing, packaging, office equipment, etc.) to handle school administrative operations, and did the institution indicate which equipment is owned or leased?

____ ____ **Meets Standard XI.A. overall.**

B. Record Protection

Standard: *Educational records of all students are maintained in a safe, fireproof, and reasonably accessible place as long as they are likely to be needed. Other records are maintained in accordance with current educational, administrative, business, and legal practice.*

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Is the organization and management of the administrative office adequate?

____ ____ 2. Are student educational records kept for as long as they are likely to be needed, and are they legible and accessible?

____ ____ 3. Is the type of equipment used to protect student records adequate?

___ ___ 4. Are educational and financial records properly maintained, stored, and retained?

___ ___ 5. Are records adequately protected from vandalism, theft, damage, or fire?

___ ___ **Meets Standard XI.B. overall.**

XII. RESEARCH AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Summary of Standards: Institution conducts continuous research and self-improvement studies.

A. Research and Self-Improvement

Standard: *An accredited institution shows evidence of progressiveness and of effort to improve operating efficiency and service. Sound research procedures and techniques are used to measure how effectively the announced course objectives are being met.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Can the institution show evidence of relevant systematic research, evaluation, and quality controls?

___ ___ 2. Has the institution made internal studies of its own operations, and did they use sound procedures for conducting the research?

___ ___ 3. Has the institution adequately conducted assessments of the outcomes of its programs and services?

___ ___ 4. Are there analytical studies of the students in terms of their progress, characteristics, background, etc.?

___ ___ 5. Are studies used effectively for making improvements?

___ ___ 6. Is the institution's library adequate?

___ ___ **Meets Standard XII.A. overall**

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B. Revision Practices

Standard: *Effective procedures are used to constantly improve materials and keep them current and up-to-date.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are effective procedures in place to monitor course materials' currency and accuracy?

___ ___ 2. Are effective procedures in place to evaluate quality of instruction, student services, and student satisfaction?

___ ___ 3. Are the results of the above monitoring procedures promptly acted upon to improve course materials and services?

___ ___ **Meets Standard XII.B. overall.**

C. Professional Growth

Standard: *Interest in improving the course of instruction and in the upgrading of personnel and faculty is demonstrated through membership in professional associations, review and application of research, and practical experience in the general field of education and the specific field of correspondence/distance education.*

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Is the staff affiliated with any professional organizations?

___ ___ 2. Are the institution's staff active with the Distance Education and Training Council?

___ ___ 3. Does the staff attend appropriate professional meetings?

___ ___ 4. Does management encourage staff to receive special training and self-development?

___ ___ 5. Does the institution provide any in-house training programs for staff?

___ ___ **Meets Standard XII.C. overall.**

D. Self-Study Program

Standard: *An accredited institution has an established program or plan reflecting a desire to improve its services to students and to provide for the growth of the institution and its staff and faculty.*

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Has the institution produced a curriculum for its staff/faculty that explains its long- and short-range development, improvement, or expansion plans?
____	____	2. Does the written plan or program provide adequate and realistic growth of the institution and its staff?
____	____	**Meets Standard XII.D. overall.**

E. Problems and Future Plans

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Are significant challenges facing the institution candidly described?
____	____	2. Does the institution have plans, and a planning process, to solve these challenges?
____	____	3. Have major changes and improvements made in the most recent five year period been adequately described?
____	____	4. Have innovations worthy of Committee notice been listed?
____	____	5. Has the institution shown that it has contributed in some way to the overall advancement of the distance education field?
____	____	6. Have significant achievements of the institution been identified?
____	____	7. Have major institutional strengths and weaknesses been identified?
____	____	8. Have intra-institutional trends demonstrating overall quality been evidenced?
____	____	**Meets Standard XII.E. overall.**

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Overall Supplementary Comments on the School

Evaluators should write a commentary explaining and expanding on the ratings made on this rating form. The commentary should be brief and specific. It should document or explain any "No" ratings for "Meets Standard _____ overall" or violations of standards, give credit to the school for strengths, and offer recommendations or suggestions the school might follow to meet the minimum standards or improve upon current practices.

The commentary should be typed, double spaced, on 8½ x 11-inch white paper.

Evaluators should transfer their overall ratings to the "Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form." The original of the Summary with commentary should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission, and a copy of the same should be sent to the Examining Committee Chair. Upon acknowledgment of receipt by the Executive Secretary, evaluators should destroy all copies, notes, computer files, and other materials pertaining to the examination.

Revised January 1996

Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form

for All Institutions

Name of Institution:_____ Date of Visit: _____

Name of Evaluator:_____

Position on Examining Committee:_____

Examining Committee Chair:_____

Meets Standard Overall

Yes No

I. Educational Objectives

___ ___ A. Description of Objectives

___ ___ B. Appropriate Objectives

II. Educational Materials

___ ___ A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials

___ ___ B. Up-to-Date Instructional Materials

___ ___ C. Authorship

___ ___ D. Reading Level

___ ___ E. Study Instructions

___ ___ F. Organization of Instructional Materials

___ ___ G. Teaching Devices

___ ___ H. Illustrations

___ ___ I. Printing and Binding

III. Educational Services

___ ___ A. Examination Services

___ ___ B. Resident Training

___ ___ C. Handling Student Inquiries

___ ___ D. Individual Differences

___ ___ E. Handling Failures

___ ___ F. Encouragement of Students

___ ___ G. Student Evaluation of Courses

___ ___ H. Appropriate Technology

IV. Student Services

___ ___ A. Grading of Examinations

___ ___ B. Student Records and Materials

___ ___ C. Counseling and Employment Assistance

V. Student Success and Satisfaction

___ ___ A. Student Success & Learning Outcomes

___ ___ B. Progress Through the Course(s)

___ ___ C. Achievement of Learning Objectives & Benefits

Meets Standard Overall

Yes No

VI. Qualifications of Principals, Faculty, and Staff

___ ___ A. Owners, Principals, and Executive Staff

___ ___ B. Educational Director

___ ___ C. Department Heads

___ ___ D. Instructors

VII. Admission Practices & Enrollment Agreements

___ ___ A. Admission Practices

___ ___ B. Enrollment Agreements (Contracts)

VIII. Advertising and Promotional Literature/ Control of Recruitment Personnel

___ ___ A. Advertising and Promotion

___ ___ B. Control of Recruitment Personnel

IX. Financial Responsibility

___ ___ A. Financial Practices

___ ___ B. Demonstrated Operation

X. Tuition Policies, Collection Procedures, & Refunds

___ ___ A. Tuition Policies

___ ___ B. Tuition Collection Procedures

___ ___ C. Tuition Refund Policies

XI. Plant and Equipment

___ ___ A. Plant and Equipment

___ ___ B. Record Protection

XII. Research and Self-Improvement

___ ___ A. Research and Self-Improvement

___ ___ B. Revision Practices

___ ___ C. Professional Growth

___ ___ D. Self-Study Program

___ ___ E. Problems and Future Plans

_____ _____

Date Signature

Revised January 1996

Attachment: Overall Supplementary Comments on the School.

Overview to Subject Specialists

Guidance on Preparing an Evaluation of a Distance Study Program or Course

The responsibility of a Subject Specialist Evaluator is to ascertain if the course materials offered by a distance study institution are complete, accurate, and up-to-date in light of the stated course objectives. In essence, you are asked to make a judgment on whether a course is of good quality and if it meets the published standards of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council. The consequences to institutions being reviewed are very significant. In addition, the reviewer objectively validates the product/materials of other professional educators who probably have spent several months or even a year or more developing the course.

Comments: As you review the course materials, answer the questions on the "Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists" and include your commentary on a separate sheet(s). Your comments should address the issues of whether or not the course meets the minimum standards. You should tell the institution what you perceive are the strengths of the course, what aspects of the course concern you, and what potential changes you believe might improve the course within the context of a viable distance study program. If you give a "B" rating, the institution will be asked to respond to your comments. Also, please remember that any "B" and/or "C" ratings must be explained (see below).

After completing the "Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists," transfer your summary ratings to the "Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists." Then send the Summary form and the sheet(s) of commentary to DETC.

Ratings: The summary rating will reflect your evaluation of each standard in one of four ways:

A = Yes, course meets the standard overall and is approved as meeting that standard.

B = Yes, course meets the standard and the institution should consider implementing the suggestion(s) to enhance the course. (When any standard is rated using this category, the institution must reply in writing to any comments made by the Subject Specialist.)

C = No, course does not meet the standard and overall course approval cannot be extended at this time. (When any standard is rated using this category, the entire course is not approved and must be re-submitted for review after all revisions are completed.)

NA=Not applicable or not known from materials received.

Examiner's Rating Form

for Subject Specialists

Name of Institution:_____

Name of Evaluator:_____

Course:_____ Date Report is Due:_____

A	**=**	**Yes, meets standard**
B	**=**	**Yes, meets standard but needs improvement**
C	**=**	**No, does not meet standard**
NA	**=**	**Not applicable or not known from materials received**

I. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Summary of Standards: Institution has reasonably attainable and clearly stated educational objectives.

A. Description of Objectives

Standard: *Educational objectives are clearly defined and simply stated. They indicate what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students. The character, nature, quality, value, and source of the instruction and educational service are set forth in language understood by the types of students enrolled. If a course prepares for an occupation or field of occupations, the objectives clearly state the types of occupations for which preparation is given.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Are the educational objectives (what the program can do for reasonably diligent students) simply stated?

_ _ _ _ 2. Are the course objectives clearly defined?

_ _ _ _ 3. Are the lesson objectives clearly defined?

(continued)

(Standard I.A. Description of Objectives, continued)

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 4. Are the institution's claims in advertisements and promotional literature consistent with the program/course objectives?

_ _ _ _ 5. Is the field for which the course prepares students a legitimate field?

_ _ _ _ 6. Do the course objectives indicate the expected outcomes, in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitude which graduates will possess?

_ _ _ _ 7. If a degree-granting institution, are the minimum educational objectives comparable to those of accredited resident institutions for the award of degrees of the same nature and level?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard I.A. overall.**

B. Appropriate Objectives

Standard: *The objectives of the institution must be reasonably attainable and be of such a nature that they can be achieved through distance study. For non-credit courses, the learning objectives must, where appropriate to the nature and type of the course, be comparable to similar non-credit courses offered in traditional institutions. Appropriate objectives include the development of skills, the provision of job-related training, the imparting of information, the training in the application of knowledge, and the development of desirable habits and attitudes. Evaluation of the educational program is based on the announced course objectives and the success with which the objectives are fulfilled.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Are the program/course objectives achievable through the correspondence/ distance study method?

_ _ _ _ 2. Are the program/course objectives comparable to similar program/course objectives offered by a traditional institution of the same nature and level?

_ _ _ _ 3. Are the program/course objectives up-to-date?

(continued)

(Standard I. B. Appropriate Objectives, continued)

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 4. Do the program/course objectives adequately include training in the application of knowledge, the development of skills and any job-related training, and development of desirable habits and attitudes?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard I. B. overall.**

II. EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Summary of Standards: Institution offers educationally sound and up-to-date courses.

A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials

Standard: *Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the announced objectives.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Will students who complete the course learn enough to achieve the course objectives?

_ _ _ _ 2. Do the instructional materials have sufficient depth for the student to master the subject?

_ _ _ _ 3. If employment opportunities were suggested in the institution's advertisements, catalogs, and/or program objectives, would the student be properly trained for employment?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.A. overall.**

B. Up-to-date Instructional Materials

Standard: *Instructional materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Are the course materials current?

(continued)

(Standard II.B. Up-to-date Instructional Materials, continued)

A B C NA

_____ 2. Are the course materials accurate?

_____ **Meets Standard II.B. overall.**

C. Authorship

Standard: *Instructional materials are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by correspondence educators skilled in preparing materials for correspondence/ distance study use.*

A B C NA

_____ 1. If study guides are used, are they appropriately prepared for use with standard texts?

_____ 2. If textbooks are used, are they suitable for distance study use?

_____ 3. If textbooks are used, are they appropriate (current, adequate, recognized as a standard in their field, etc.) for the subject being taught?

_____ 4. Do the instructional materials appear to be written by qualified and knowledgeable people?

_____ **Meets Standard II.C. overall.**

D. Reading Level

Standard: *The reading difficulty of the instructional materials is keyed to the reading competence of enrollees in the course.*

A B C NA

_____ 1. Is the reading level appropriate for the instructional materials?

(continued)

(Standard II.D. Reading Level, continued)

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ _ 2. Is the reading level appropriate for the intended student audience?

_ _ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.D. overall**

E. Study Instructions

Standard: *Suitable instructions on how to study the course clearly indicate to the students what to do and how to learn effectively.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ _ 1. Are instructions to students on how to proceed through the course adequate and clearly written?

_ _ _ _ _ 2. Are instructions to students on how to study the course adequate and clearly written?

_ _ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.E. overall.**

F. Organization of Instructional Materials

Standard: *The organization and presentation of the instructional materials are in accord with sound, psychological principles of learning.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ _ 1. Is the content of the course broken into manageable parts or segments for convenient study sessions?

_ _ _ _ _ 2. Are the lessons organized in such a way that the student can arrange appropriate individual study sessions?

_ _ _ _ _ 3. Does the presentation of the course materials clearly adhere to a principle of modern learning psychology as it applies to distance education?

(continued)

(Standard II.F. Organization of Instructional Materials, continued)

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 4. Are students required to submit an appropriate number of assignments to adequately evaluate their knowledge, skills and aptitude of the subject?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.F. overall.**

G. Teaching Devices

Standard: *Instructional programs make effective use of appropriate teaching devices and supplemental instructional aids.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Are necessary learning and training devices used?

_ _ _ _ 2. Do the devices enhance the instruction?

_ _ _ _ 3. Are the devices up to date?

_ _ _ _ 4. Do the devices improve student motivation?

_ _ _ _ 5. Are the devices properly integrated with texts and lesson assignments?

_ _ _ _ 6. Are adequate instructional materials supplied to students at the appropriate times?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.G. overall.**

H. Illustrations

Standard: *Illustrations are used intelligently, and they have educational and/or inspirational value.* (This refers to school-prepared materials.)

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Do illustrations, graphs, and drawings have educational value (i.e., do they contribute to the attainment of course objectives)?

(continued)

(Standard II.H. Illustrations, continued)

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 2. Do the illustrations, graphs, and drawings provide motivational value?

_ _ _ _ 3. Do the illustrations, graphs, and drawings enhance the course presentation?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.H. overall.**

I. Printing and Binding

Standard: *Instructional materials are legibly reproduced, well-manufactured, suitably bound, and attractive in layout and format.*

A B C NA

_ _ _ _ 1. Is the layout of the printed page appropriate to the learning task?

_ _ _ _ 2. Is the line length, size of type and type face appropriate for reading ease for the intended student audience?

_ _ _ _ 3. Are school-prepared lesson booklets of appropriate size for use in an individual study session?

_ _ _ _ 4. Is the commercially-prepared text appropriate for the distance education course?

_ _ _ _ 5. Does the reproduction of text material adequately enhance the educational function of the course?

_ _ _ _ 6. Do the binding processes used for texts adequately enhance the educational function of the course?

_ _ _ _ 7. Will the materials and size of shipments hold up under UPS, USPS, or other shipping methods?

_ _ _ _ **Meets Standard II.I. overall.**

III. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Summary of Standards: Institution provides satisfactory educational services.

A. Examination Services

Standard: *The submission of examinations which adequately cover the materials is required. Adequate evaluation, correction services, and necessary counseling by an instructor are provided for examinations.*

A B C NA

_____ 1. Are the types of test items selected appropriate for what they are designed to measure?

_____ 2. Are methods used for submitting exams appropriate?

_____ 3. Do subjective exams/projects measure the student's ability to apply skills that are taught in the lessons?

_____ 4. Do the exams and assignments measure the achievement of announced objectives?

_____ 5. Are the number and length of examinations adequate to determine if sufficient student mastery of course objectives has taken place?

_____ **Meets Standard III.A. overall.**

Overall Supplementary Comments on the School

Evaluators should write a commentary explaining and expanding on the ratings made. The commentary should be brief and specific. Consult the "Overview to Subject Specialists" for guidance on preparing the summary report. The commentary should be typed, double spaced, on 8½ x 11-inch white paper.

Evaluators should transfer their overall ratings to the "Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists." The original of the Summary with commentary should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission, and a copy of the same should be sent to the Examining Committee Chair. Upon acknowledgment of receipt by the Executive Secretary, evaluators should destroy all copies, notes, computer files, and other materials pertaining to the examination.

Revised January 1996

Summary of the Examiner's Rating Form

for Subject Specialists

Name of Institution: _____

Name of Subject Specialist: _____

Course Title: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

RATING				EDUCATIONAL STANDARD
A	B	C	NA	**I. Educational Objectives**
				A. Description of Objectives
				B. Appropriate Objectives
A	B	C	NA	**II. Educational Materials**
				A. Comprehensive Instructional Materials
				B. Up-to-Date Instructional Materials
				C. Authorship
				D. Reading Level
				E. Study Instructions
				F. Organization of Instructional Materials
				G. Teaching Devices
				H. Illustrations
				I. Printing and Binding
A	B	C	NA	**III. Educational Services**
				A. Examination Services

Above Ratings equal:

A = Yes, course meets the standard overall and is approved as meeting that standard.

B = Yes, course meets the standard and the institution should consider implementing the suggestion(s) to enhance the course. (When any standard is rated using this category, the institution must reply in writing to any comments made by the Subject Specialist.)

C = No, course does not meet the standard and overall course approval cannot be extended at this time. (When any standard is rated using this category, the entire course is not approved and must be re-submitted for review after all revisions are completed.)

NA= Not applicable or not known from materials received.

January 1996 *Attachment: Supplementary Comments on the Course*

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

Options for Course Receiving Any "C" Ratings

If a course receives any "C" ratings, the *"Course Does Not Meet the Standard"* and cannot be approved at this time. The institution may exercise one of the following four options:

1. **Make Changes and Re-Submit:** (Institution responsible for a $250 follow-up fee.)

   Make changes and re-submit the course to the **same** evaluator for re-evaluation.

2. **Request New Reviewer:** (Institution responsible for a $500 review fee.)

   Seek a completely **new** reviewer.

3. **Send to Third Evaluator:** (Institution responsible for a $500 review fee.)

   In the case of reviews of "new" courses which initially require **two** independent evaluations, the evaluations can sometimes conflict. In the case of two conflicting reviews, one approving and one not approving, the course will be sent to a third evaluator who receives the other two reviewers comments and acts as an "arbitrator" between the two. If the third evaluator concurs with any of the "C" rating(s), the institution can appeal the findings directly to the Accrediting Commission or withdraw the course from the process and re-submit following corrective revisions to it.

4. **Withdraw Course:**

   Withdraw the course from consideration.

Examiner's Rating Form

for Change of Location

Name of Institution:_____ Date Visited:_____

Name of Evaluator:_____ Position on Committee: _____

Examining Committee Chair:_____ Date Report due to Chair:_____

The questions listed below reflect characteristics of importance to the Accrediting Commission as described in the "Policy on Change of Location." This check list will assist you in determining if a new location, facilities, records, etc., of an accredited institution meet the Accreditation Standards.

A "Yes" or "No" response should be recorded for each question below. Enter "NA" if the question does not apply. Explanatory comments and constructive recommendations should be attached to this rating form. A copy of this form (with comments) should be submitted to the Examining Committee Chair. The original form and comments should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission.

A. Physical Plant

Yes	No		
____	____	1.	Are applicable state educational authority approval documents available and current?
____	____	2.	Are workplace conditions and amount of workshop space satisfactory, hygienic, and safe?
____	____	3.	Does the school comply with all applicable local, state, and federal health and safety requirements?
____	____	4.	Does the school have adequate technical equipment (data processing, packaging, office equipment, etc.) to adequately handle school administrative operations?
____	____	5.	Does the school plant conform to any photos provided students in advertising or sales materials?
____	____	6.	Are appropriate fire evacuation plans and exit signs posted conspicuously in staff working areas?

Yes	No	
___	___	7. Are the sanitary facilities adequate for male and female staff and in compliance with local, city, and state regulations?
___	___	8. Are first aid materials and supplies sufficient and adequate?
___	___	9. Are any staff trained in first aid and CPR procedures?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall**

B. Record Protection

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Are the organization and management of the administrative office adequate?
___	___	2. Are student educational records kept for as long as they are likely to be needed, and are they legible and accessible?
___	___	3. Is the type of equipment used to protect student records adequate?
___	___	4. Are educational and financial records properly maintained, stored, and retained?
___	___	5. Are records adequately protected from vandalism, theft, damage, or fire?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall.**

C. Student Services

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Do student services at the new location continue to meet the accreditation standards for prompt and complete academic and administrative services to students?
___	___	2. Has the school, in changing locations, offered uninterrupted service to students during the relocation?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall**

D. Staff and Instructors

Yes	No	
___	___	1. As a result of the relocation, has the school continued to meet the standard for having qualified staff, including qualified academic personnel?
___	___	2. Are instructors adequately qualified and experienced in the subjects they are instructing?
___	___	3. Are there an adequate number of instructors for the number of students enrolled?
___	___	4. Is each student provided individualized instructional service?
___	___	5. Are instructors appropriately licensed or credentialed for their subject areas?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall**

_____
Evaluator's Signature

_____
Date

Examiner's Rating Form

for Degree Programs

Name of Institution:_____ Date Visited:_____

Name of Evaluator:_____ Position on Committee: _____

Examining Committee Chair:_____ Date Report due to Chair:_____

The questions listed below reflect characteristics of importance to the Accrediting Commission as described in the "Policy on Degree Programs" and will assist you in determining if the institution meets the Accreditation Standards.

This rating form supplements the "Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions" and both forms should be filled out by evaluators assigned to evaluate degree programs. A "Yes" or "No" response should be recorded for each question below. Enter "NA" if the question does not apply. Any "No" rating must be explained. Explanatory comments and constructive recommendations should be attached to this rating form. A copy of this form (with comments) should be submitted with the "Summary of Examiner's Rating Form" to the Examining Committee Chair. The original form, summary, and comments should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission.

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Does the institution meet the Commission's definition of a distance study institution?
____	____	2. Is the institution chartered, licensed, or given formal authority from the appropriate governmental body to award degrees by distance study instruction?
____	____	3. Are all distance degree programs offerings at or below the Master's degree level?
____	____	4. Are degree programs clearly on the postsecondary level?
____	____	5. Do the degrees awarded consist of the minimum semester hours or quarter hours as required by DETC (see "Policy on Degree Programs")?

(continued)

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

Yes	No		
___	___	6.	Do the degrees awarded consist of the minimum semester hours or quarter hours in the general education courses as required by DETC?
___	___	7.	Are "semester" and "quarter" hours equivalent to the commonly-accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement in accredited institutions?
___	___	8.	Does the curriculum quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards in effect at other collegiate institutions offering similar degrees?
___	___	9.	Are instructional procedures, texts, and materials appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of postsecondary degree-awarding institutions offering similar programs?
___	___	10.	Are the analytical, communicative, and quantitative skills (and levels of achievement) defined for the degree student?
___	___	11.	If a new applicant, is there at least one academic degree program in which students have been enrolled for a minimum of two years?
___	___	12.	Does the institution have an on-going program to assess student success with respect to the stated degree program outcomes?
___	___	13.	Can the institution demonstrate how the assessment program is used to enhance degree offerings and services?
___	___	14.	Do graduates exhibit skill and knowledge attainment through the demonstrated mastery of educational objectives equivalent to resident degree programs which are similar in nature and level?
___	___	15.	Can the institution satisfactorily document that its degree graduates exhibit the skills and knowledge equivalent to resident degree graduates from programs similar in nature and level?
___	___	16.	If residential instruction is necessary, does the instruction **require** such training?
___	___	17.	If the resident instruction is necessary, is it adequate?
___	___	18.	Are there an adequate number of proctored final examinations?

(continued)

Yes	No		
___	___	19.	Does the proctoring system **assure** that degree candidates have personally fulfilled program requirements?
___	___	20.	Does the institution require a high school diploma or a recognized equivalent credential for admission?
___	___	21.	If the institution offers a Master's degree program, must applicants possess a Baccalaureate Degree from an institution accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of Education or an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or equivalent authorities for Non-U.S. institutions?
___	___	22.	Does the institution take reasonable measures to assure that the student has no physical limitation which will prevent success in the program contemplated?
___	___	23.	If the institution enrolls a person not meeting the established qualifications for enrollment, is a record made showing the reasons for acceptance of that person?
___	___	24.	Are applicants checked to assure they have the appropriate prior education and other qualifications to enroll?
___	___	25.	Are the institution's transfer and credit for experiential learning policies in line with Accrediting Commission maximum levels?
___	___	26.	If experiential credit is awarded, is it based on an assessment of learning experiences which have been detailed and documented by the student according to a published format?
___	___	27.	Is the experiential learning relevant to the particular degree program toward which credit is sought?
___	___	28.	Do the educational director and members of the degree program faculty possess the appropriate academic degrees and backgrounds in the disciplines in which they are instructing?
___	___	29.	Does the institution's catalog contain and accurately depict the minimum requirements requested by DETC?

(continued)

Yes No

____ ____ 30. Does the institution provide adequate access to facilities for library-media services for students and faculty?

_____

Evaluator's Signature

_____

Date

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Examiner's Rating Form

for Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs

Name of Institution:_____ Date Visited:_____

Name of Evaluator:_____ Position on Committee: _____

Examining Committee Chair:_____ Date Report due to Chair:_____

The questions listed below reflect characteristics of importance to the Accrediting Commission as described in the "Policy on Combination Distance Study-Resident Programs" and "Policy on New Training Sites." This check list will assist you in determining if combination programs and training sites meet the Accreditation Standards.

A "Yes" or "No" response should be recorded for each question below. Enter "NA" if the question does not apply. Explanatory comments and constructive recommendations should be attached to this rating form. A copy of this form (with comments) should be submitted to the Examining Committee Chair. The original form and comments should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission.

A. Advertising and Promotion

Yes No

____ ____ 1. Do all ads and other promotional materials clearly state that both distance study and resident training are offered? (Language used must be understandable to the average reader.)

____ ____ 2. Are the tuition prices for distance study and resident training separately stated on the enrollment form?

____ ____ 3. Is the tuition fairly distributed for each portion of the course?

____ ____ **Meets Standard overall**

(continued)

B. Course Structure and Materials

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Does the student sign an enrollment agreement which includes both phases of training?
___	___	2. Does a substantial and predominant distance study phase precede the resident phase?
___	___	3. Must the distance study phase be successfully completed before the student can enter the resident phase?
___	___	4. Does the distance study material provide meaningful information necessary for the achievement of the course objective?
___	___	5. Is the program organized to preclude the student's submission or evaluation of distance study lessons while the student is at the school or when the student is in the resident phase of the training?
___	___	6. Does the resident training avoid unnecessary duplication of the distance study material?
___	___	7. Are resident instructors familiar with the content of the distance study course?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall.**

C. Site/School

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Are the classrooms and buildings in compliance with all local, city, and state fire codes?
___	___	2. Is the state educational authority approval document available and current at the time of the visit?
___	___	3. Are the sanitary facilities adequate for male and female students and in compliance with local, city, and state regulations?
___	___	4. Does the school have adequate equipment and procedures to provide for safety actions with regard to fire, injury to students, or handling of hazardous products?
___	___	5. Are first aid materials and supplies sufficient and adequate?

(continued)

Yes	No	
___	___	6. Are any on-site staff trained in first aid and CPR procedures?
___	___	7. Does the school maintain adequate levels of liability, accident, and other insurance for protection of its students in resident training?
___	___	8. Are copies of proof of ownership documents (leases and/or deeds) for equipment and property available?
___	___	9. Is all necessary training equipment available at the time of the visit?
___	___	10. Are appropriate fire evacuation plans and exit signs posted conspicuously in classrooms and student areas?
___	___	11. Are fire drills conducted?
___	___	12. Does the school operate its own resident training facilities?
___	___	13. Are out-of-door training areas properly maintained, safely managed, and adequate in size?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall**

D. Faculty

Yes	No	
___	___	1. Does the school have appropriate educational standards and qualifications for the hiring of resident training instructors?
___	___	2. Are site directors and resident instructors qualified for their positions?
___	___	3. Do resident instructors make effective use of the student's experiences in the distance study component?
___	___	4. Does the institution make an effort not to duplicate teaching that was covered in distance study?
___	___	5. Are distance study records for each student in resident training maintained, available, and used at the student's training site?

(continued)

Yes No

___ ___ 6. Is a resident program of instruction (POI) available?

___ ___ 7. Is the resident POI observed by instructors?

___ ___ 8. Are class lesson plans available?

___ ___ 9. Are class lesson plans substantive and comprehensive enough to meet the objectives set forth in the POI?

___ ___ 10. Are lessons plans actually used by instructors?

___ ___ **Meets Standard overall**

E. On-Site Student Services

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Does the school have a placement assistance program? What is the school's placement rate? _____

___ ___ 2. If the school has a placement assistance program, is proper follow-up made to determine whether employment has been obtained?

___ ___ 3. Are adequate records kept of students finding employment?

___ ___ 4. Are housing arrangements adequate for students?

___ ___ 5. Are students' safety and transportation requirements adequately provided for?

___ ___ 6. Are food services for students adequate?

___ ___ 7. Are break areas, student lounges, and dining facilities adequate, clean, and comfortable?

___ ___ 8. Are there quiet and clean study areas and/or reference libraries for students on-site?

___ ___ 9. Is appropriate counseling or help available on-site to students who may have academic or personal difficulties?

(continued)

Yes No

___ ___ 10. Are dormitories or housing facilities adequate?

___ ___ **Meets Standard overall**

F. Tuition Allocation

Yes No

___ ___ 1. Are tuition charges for combination courses separately stated on the enrollment contract?

___ ___ 2. Are tuition charges "fairly distributed" for each portion of the course, i.e., does the amount charged for the distance study tuition avoid the appearance of "front end loading"?

___ ___ **Meets Standard overall**

_____
Evaluator's Signature

_____
Date

Examiner's Rating Form

for Non-U.S. Institutions

Name of Institution:_____ Date Visited:_____

Name of Evaluator:_____ Position on Committee: _____

Examining Committee Chair:_____ Date Report due to Chair:_____

The questions listed below reflect characteristics of importance to the Accrediting Commission as described in the "Policy on Non-U.S. Institutions" and will assist you in determining if institutions outside the United States meet the Accreditation Standards.

This rating form supplements the "Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions" and both forms should be filled out by evaluators assigned to evaluate non-U.S. institutions. A "Yes" or "No" response should be recorded for each question below. Enter "NA" if the question does not apply. Any "No" rating must be explained. Explanatory comments and constructive recommendations should be attached to this rating form. A copy of this form (with comments) should be submitted with the "Summary of Examiner's Rating Form" to the Examining Committee Chair. The original form, summary, and comments should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission.

Yes	No	
____	____	1. Are a large proportion of the school's courses and materials in English?
____	____	2. If materials are translated from or to another language, is the translation of good quality?
____	____	3. Has the institution explained, to your satisfaction, how it benefits or will benefit from and use DETC accrediation?
____	____	4. Does the school head and/or key personnel participate or plan to participate actively in Distance Education and Training Council activities?
____	____	5. Do results of the student surveys indicate satisfaction with the school's educational and student services?

(continued)

Yes	No	
___	___	6. Is the school in compliance with each standard of the DETC?
___	___	7. If the school has deviated from strict compliance because of custom, language, economics, geography, and other factors, are you satisfied that such deviation is allowable? Please explain and attach comments to this form.
___	___	8. As an evaluator, were you able to resolve any concerns you may have encountered or which one might have presumed existed because of the non-U.S. location?
___	___	**Meets Standard overall**

_____

Evaluator's Signature

_____

Date

E. Reports

	# of Pages
1. Guide to Chair's Report	10

Guide for Preparing an Examining Committee Chair's Report

This Guide for Chair's of Accrediting Commission Examining Committees provides information on the organization and preparation of the Examining Committee Chair's Report. A sample report is included.

Purpose of the Chair's Report

The purpose of the Chair's Report is to present to the Accrediting Commission a clear, succinct, and accurate statement of the findings of an Examining Committee visiting an applicant school. It should present a **composite** view of Committee findings on the policies, conditions, and practices of the school as measured against the published standards for accredited schools.

A copy of the Report is forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer of the applicant school by the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission for comment and response before Accrediting Commission action. This procedure provides the school with the opportunity to respond to Committee findings, as well as to take and report on corrective action in questioned areas.

Instructions for Preparation of the Chair's Report

The following points should be observed when preparing a Report:

1. The Report should cover each of the standards appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation and should be a concise, factual, and thorough presentation of Committee findings. Where appropriate, specific examples should be provided to support these findings. The Report should be written in the third person.

2. The special attributes and the deficiencies of the school should be noted, using the wording of the standards. Deficiencies should be documented.

3. The Report should present major points covered in the individual examiner's reports and relate these points to specific standards. Above all, the Report must be accurate.

4. The "Summary of Committee Findings" at the beginning of the Report is of vital importance, and special attention should be given to this section. Summary statements should be supported and documented by the findings presented in the body of the report.

5. Of critical importance is the Committee's overall assessment of the institution's documented performance with respect to student achievement (Standard V). The Chair's Report must

include an assessment of the school's ongoing outcomes assessment efforts, e.g., can the institution show that their students receive what the institution promised them?

6. Relevant comments of findings from the reports of Subject Specialists, as well as comments from state/federal agencies and student surveys, should be incorporated into the Report where appropriate.

7. Emphasis in the Report should be placed on whether the school **does or does not meet** specific standards. The Report should use the phrasing of the standards. It should use declarative sentences and simple verbs. Where possible, the Report should avoid broad generalities and speculative views.

8. To assure that Committee findings and recommendations are accurately presented, the Chair should use direct quotations, references, data, and examples from the reports of Committee members in the Report, but such citations should not identify or refer to individual committee members by name or committee position. The Chair may re-word or edit language from committee members' reports to make the Report coherent.

9. The Report may—but is not required to—present Committee recommendations on how an institution might take action to bring present policies, practices, materials, or services into accord with specific standards. The Report **should not** make any recommendation to the Accrediting Commission on the action it should take concerning the accreditation of the school.

10. The Chair's Report should be sent to the Executive Secretary of the Commission. Each Commissioner is given a copy of the Report to review at the time the institution is being considered. Since the Chair's Report is forwarded to the institution's Chief Executive Officer, it should be self-contained and should **not** make reference to individual reports or make use of such reports as enclosures.

11. Two copies of the Chair's Report should be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission. In typing the Report, the format provided in the sample should be followed.

12. Members of the Examining Committee are advised to destroy copies of all materials pertaining to the examination, including Self-Evaluation Reports, notes, and other items when receipt of their reports are acknowledged by the Executive Secretary. The Chair should assure, however, that the Commission has a copy of all relevant material for its permanent file before such materials are destroyed.

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Sample Chair's Report

Examining Committee Chair's Report
on the Examination of

XYZ Distance Study School
1234 North Street
Chicago, Illinois 60632

Visitation Date

July 16, 199__

Submitted By

Mary M. Executive

Report Preparation Date
August 10, 199__

Confidential

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Chair's Report on the Accrediting Examination
of
XYZ Distance Study School

Members of the Examining Committee:

Chair:	Mary M. Executive, President Commonwealth School 1234 South Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44100
Educational Standards Evaluator:	Arthur B. Sawyer, Educational Director Eagle Institute 1234 West Street Chicago, Illinois 60600
Business Standards Evaluator:	David O. Baker, Treasurer School of New Thought 1234 East Boulevard Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53200
Accrediting Commission Observer:	Michael P. Lambert, Executive Secretary Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council 1601 18th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009-2529
Observer:	Christopher F. Statesman, Director Bureau of Schools State Capitol Building 1234 Northwest Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60633

The Twelve Standards of Accreditation

Standard Number	Twelve Summary Statements of Findings
I	Objectives of the courses are clearly stated, although the scope and limitations of the accounting course ought to be defined more clearly.
II	Instructional materials are satisfactory, although the television servicing course is out-of-date.
III	Examinations need improvement and instructors were not giving the instructional service one would expect in terms of the standards for accreditation.
IV	Educational records, mailing schedules, counseling services, and other student services appear to be of fairly high quality. However, exam turnaround time is slow.
V	Students are well satisfied with their courses and services. While the completion rates might be improved, they are not excessively low. Students are meeting or exceeding the announced objectives.
VI	Instructors are well qualified technically, but the educational director has inadequate professional preparation in education.
VII	The school screens applications carefully. There is no file or evidence of the disenrollment of students initiated by the school. The cancellation provisions are not in accord with the minimum DETC policy.
VIII	There is no field representatives manual or organized training program.
IX	The school is in satisfactory financial condition and has demonstrated more than two years of sound and ethical operation.
X	A series of increasingly-tough collection letters and, eventually, collection agencies are used to recover delinquent accounts. The school does not know of the detailed practices of the outside collection agency.
XI	The physical plant and equipment are reasonably well kept and are in good order. Essential records are well maintained.
XII	The school does not have a plan or program for growth and improvement. No evidence was available of an organized, continuing self-study or research program.

I. Educational Objectives

Findings

With the exception noted below, the Committee determined that the objectives of the three courses offered as set forth in both the promotional literature and Self-Evaluation Report were clearly stated, appropriate, and attainable.

The course catalog promised training in accounting for "all types of organizations." The course does not cover non-profit societies.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the catalog be revised and that it define more clearly the scope and limitations of the accounting training offered.

II. Educational Materials

Findings

Instructional materials in computer literacy and accounting are authoritative, up-to-date, and sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the objectives stated for them.

The television servicing course was last revised four years ago. It is out-of-date. It contains no mention of high definition TV, for example.

While the school has made no study of the reading level of its materials, it appears to be satisfactory for the type of students enrolled.

The instructional materials in all three courses appear to be well organized, well illustrated, and suitably bound. Some of the photographs in the computer literacy course are not clearly reproduced.

Recommendations

The television servicing course should be revised as necessary; TV servicing is a rapidly changing field.

III. Educational Services

Findings

Examination service was minimal. The compensation plan and merit rating of instructors seemed to put too much emphasis on speed at the expense of quality and real instructional service. Relatively little personal instruction is given on the typical student paper in accounting.

Analysis of a sample of the grades given in the television servicing course showed over 85% were receiving 95 and above with only 1% failing. Grade distributions in other courses showed a more normal spread but were skewed in favor of high marks.

Recommendations

The school should institute an immediate review and overhaul of its exam processing and examination item analysis should be implemented.

IV. Student Services

Findings

Mailing schedules provide students with an ample supply of instructional materials. Adequate financial and educational records are maintained on computer disks. Counseling is provided on request. Exam turnaround time was slow. Employment assistance is offered but was not in much demand by students.

Recommendations

The school should do what is necessary to improve the turnaround time on examinations.

V. Student Success and Satisfaction

Findings

A review of a file of student complaints shows little dissatisfaction with the educational services. Most of the complaints were concerned with misunderstandings with the field representatives and slowness in receiving returned examinations. Student

achievement measures verified by the Committee indicate that the students are meeting or exceeding the announced objectives of the programs.

VI. Qualifications of Faculty

Findings

The Educational Director has a BS degree in Business with no preparation in education. The instructors in all three courses are technically well qualified. Outside graders and readers, living in the community, are carefully screened and have excellent qualifications in the subjects being taught.

Recommendations

The Educational Director could benefit by taking several education courses dealing with the psychology of adult learning, methods of teaching, curriculum building, and techniques of testing. Attendance at DETC seminars and workshops would prove helpful.

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements

Findings

The school screens applications carefully. About five percent of all applicants are turned down because of insufficient educational background, under-age, and lack of experience; however, this could not be documented without a hand count of the files.

The cancellation provisions are not in accord with the minimum DETC policy. The school does not subtract out the registration fee when calculating student refunds.

Recommendations

The refund policy should be changed to permit cancellation under clearly stated conditions using the DETC tuition refund policy as a minimum guide.

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VIII. Advertising and Promotion

Findings

All advertising and promotional literature conforms to the letter and spirit of the DETC Business Standards.

Enrollments are taken primarily through field representatives, and the standards are met with respect to sales representatives.

However, the school's training program for sales representatives/recruitment personnel does not meet the intent of the Business Standards (reference section II C.5.).

Recommendations

A comprehensive sales training program should be instituted, and a sales manual needs to be prepared.

IX. Financial Responsibility

Findings

The school is on an accrual basis of accounting, and data provided indicates that the school has shown ample ability to meet its obligations to students and creditors. Income from student accounts is recorded as lessons are received for grading. The current position of this school is best indicated by its current assets of $500,000 as opposed to its current liabilities of $250,000. The school maintains a relatively large net working capital. The school has experienced a modest net profit during each of the past three years. The school has achieved more than two years of sound and ethical operation.

X. Tuition Policies

Findings

The school uses a series of increasingly tough collection letters and then employs an outside collection agency to recover delinquent accounts. The school was not aware of many of the practices of this agency, and the agency pursues collections in its own fashion.

Recommendations

The school should monitor the practices of the agency to assure that only good taste and ethical business practices are observed in collection efforts. Also, the school must ensure that the agency acknowledges the existence of the school's cancellation and settlement policy.

XI. Plant and Equipment

Findings

The work space and surroundings generally are sufficient in quantity and quality for the work being done.

Financial and educational records are well maintained and carefully secured.

XII. Research and Self-Improvement

Findings

Other than two or three internal checks and sampling studies of practices, little evidence of ongoing research was discovered. The school could not provide evidence of an established program or plan to improve its services, materials, or staff capability. There is no written plan for future improvement.

Recommendations

The school ought to develop the habit of testing more of its practices—other than its testing of advertising copy. Enrollment practices, tuition collection, student service, and many other operational areas are subject to improvement through experiment and analysis of records. An organized and continuous program of self-study and analysis would be an obvious asset to them. Attendance at DETC meetings would be helpful.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary M. Executive

Mary M. Executive, Chair
Examining Committee
August 10, 199__

f. DETC Business Standards

	# of Pages
DETC Business Standards **[changed 1/97]**	9

DETC Business Standards

Business Standards are a part of the Accrediting Commission's overall standards for accredited institutions. The policies, procedures, practices, and activities of an accredited institution must be in compliance with these Standards. In reviewing an accredited school, the Examining Committee members will determine adherence to the Business Standards.

Newly accredited institutions must come into compliance with the Standards upon gaining accreditation. The Business Standards prescribe the minimum policies accredited schools must observe in all phases of school operations. **No institution, whether an initial applicant for accreditation or an applicant for re-accreditation, can receive or retain accreditation if it is not properly licensed, authorized or approved by the applicable state educational institution authority [added 1/97].**

Institutions, including institution's seeking initial accreditation, must also conform to the provisions of applicable laws and regulations, and these governmental regulations take precedence if there is a variance with the Business Standards.

Business Standards

Section I: School and Course Promotion

A. Advertising and Promotional Literature
(Accreditation Standard VIII A)

1. Each advertisement or piece of promotional literature written or used by a school must be completely truthful and must not give any false, misleading, or exaggerated impression with respect to the school, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates.

2. All advertising and promotional literature used by a school must clearly indicate that training or education is being offered.

3. All advertising and promotional literature must include the full and correct name and location of the school and disclose the fact that home study training or education is given. In addition, the local address of a sales representative may be used. Advertisements that do not identify the school by name ("blind ads") cannot be used.

4. The school's address must appear in catalogs, enrollment agreements, promotional literature, and official DETC listings. For this purpose, a Post Office Box number will not be considered an address.

5. Testimonials of endorsement, commendation, or recommendation may be used in school catalogs, advertisements, and promotional literature provided that they portray currently correct conditions or facts and provided that the writer's prior consent is obtained and no remuneration is made for either the consent or use of the endorsement. Such letters shall be kept on file and available for inspection.

6. To enroll students, a school will not use advertisements or promotional material which are classified, designated, or captioned "men and/or women wanted to train for . . . ," "help wanted," "employment," "business opportunities," or words or terms of similar import which represent directly or by implication that employment is being offered.

7. Schools using classified columns of newspapers or other publications to enroll students must use only those columns headed "education," "schools," or "instruction." "Help wanted," "employment," or "business opportunities" classifications may be used only to advertise for employees or sales representatives for the school.

8. The use of the following words is restricted or prohibited:

   a. The word "Free" shall not be used to describe any item or service regularly included as a part of the school's course or services.

   b. The word "Guarantee" shall not be used by a school for advertising or promotional purposes.

B. School and Course Recognition

1. The school may use the fact of accreditation in its advertising, promotional literature, or letterheads only in the following manner:

   a. Use of the official Accredited School Seal.

   b. Use of the statement, with or without the official seal:

Accredited Member Distance Education and Training Council
or
Accredited Member DETC

   c. Use of the statement, with or without the official seal:

Accredited by the Accrediting Commission
of the
Distance Education and Training Council

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d. If an institution elects to disclose its accredited status, it must make available the name, address and telephone number of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council [updated 1/97].

2. Any statement referring to the U.S. Department of Education's recognition of the Accrediting Commission must read:

The Accrediting Commission
of the Distance Education and Training Council
is listed by the
U.S. Department of Education as a
nationally recognized accrediting agency.

The above statement **may not** be used in common media advertising.

3. Any statement referring to the CHEA recognition of the Accrediting Commission must read:

The Accrediting Commission
of the Distance Education and Training Council
is a recognized member of the
Council for Higher Education Accreditation

Section II: Student Enrollment

A. Enrollment Agreements (Contracts)
(Accreditation Standard VII B)

1. The school must use an enrollment agreement (contract) which clearly outlines the obligations of both the school and the student.

2. A copy of the enrollment agreement must be furnished the student either by the school's sales representative or by the school itself in the case of enrollments not obtained by sales representatives. The enrollment agreement must be written in the same language (English, Spanish, French) as the language of the promotional presentation.

3. When an enrollment is obtained by a sales representative, a receipt for money collected must be left with the applicant.

4. The terms of the school's cancellation and settlement policy must be clearly disclosed in the enrollment agreement.

B. Admission Practices
(Accreditation Standard VII A)

1. In admitting students, the school must observe fully the rights of all applicants and commit no action that would be detrimental to any applicant's opportunity to enroll because of race, sex, color, creed, or national origin.

2. The school must disclose to the applicant in writing the scope and nature of the course and its educational and/or training objectives.

3. The school must establish the qualifications which an applicant must possess to enable the successful assimilation of the educational materials furnished. The school must also determine with reasonable certainty, prior to the acceptance of the applicant, that the applicant has been informed of and has the proper qualifications to enroll in the course. The school must also determine that an applicant has no handicap, physical or otherwise, which could reasonably prevent the applicant's use of the knowledge or skills gained from the course.

4. No accredited school may enroll a person of compulsory school age until it establishes with responsible parties that pursuit of the course will not be detrimental to required schooling.

5. If a school enrolls a person not meeting the established qualifications for enrollment, a record must be made showing the reasons for acceptance of that person.

C. Recruiting, Training and Control of Sales Representatives
(Accreditation Standard VIII B)

1. The school has full responsibility for the actions, statements, and conduct of its sales representatives.

2. **Schools must assure that sales representatives are properly licensed or registered in any state where they work. Schools will maintain appropriate records on each representative [changed 1/97].**

3. **Each sales representative must be given accurate information regarding the conditions of employment, including the method or remuneration, and sign a written agreement. This agreement will include a description of the relationship between the representative and the school, and a pledge of adherence to the "DETC Code of Ethics for Sales Representatives," the terms of exclusivity of the engagement, and termination rights and procedures [changed 1/97].**

4. **Schools must train new sales representatives before they begin enrolling students. This training must include information on applicable Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education**

and Training Council's standards and requirements, including the Code of Ethics. Materials covering procedures, sales presentation instructions and general sales policies must be supplied to each representative [changed 1/97].

5. **Accredited institutions may make use of telemarketers in accordance with ethical business practices. Telemarketing activities will conform to applicable federal and state laws, including guidelines issued by the Federal Trade Commission [added 1/97].**

6. A sales representative must not use any title that indicates special qualifications for career guidance, counseling, or registration which are not in fact possessed.

7. Sales manuals or materials covering applicable procedures and sales presentation instructions and general sales policies must be supplied to each sales representative.

8. If a sales representative is authorized to prepare or place advertising or to use promotional materials, the school has full responsibility for the materials used and must approve any such materials prior to their use.

9. During their periods of engagement, the school must maintain appropriate and current records on each individual sales representative.

Section III: Tuition, Cancellation, and Collection

A. Tuition Policies

(Accreditation Standards X A & B)

1. Tuition is defined as the total price of a course of instruction. Tuition includes all fees and separately itemized charges comprising the overall charge for a course of instruction, including fees and charges for the following:

   (a) Application, registration, matriculation, and down payment;

   (b) Texts, study guides, workbooks, and required reference materials;

   (c) Kits, tools, supplies, equipment, and audio visual devices and programs which are included as a regular part of a course or such items required to be purchased from the school;

   (d) The lease or rental of required equipment, tools, or other devices;

   (e) Instruction and educational service;

(f) Placement and other services offered as a regular part of a course;

(g) Required resident training;

(h) Earned finance charges;

(i) Optional resident training and sessions offered as a regular part of a course; and

(j) Required proctored examinations.

The above definition of tuition must be used by accredited schools in preparing enrollment agreements, calculating refund amounts, and in cancelling and settling student accounts.

2. The total course price for any specific course offered by a school must be the same for all persons at any given time, whether sold by mail or through a sales representative, except for proper discounts to members of religious, non-profit and government organizations, or to private organizations for quantity or group enrollments, and for bona fide special payment plans available to all students at the same time.

3. Terms of payment may be varied by the school from time to time and from person to person, so long as the price charged for the course at any given time and under any given payment plan remains the same for all persons.

4. Special price or discount offers must be bona fide and must state the specific date of termination.

5. Announcements of price increases must be bona fide and must state the effective date of the price increase, and the price increase must be applicable to all enrollees thereafter.

6. Scholarships or partial scholarships must be bona fide.

B. Cancellation, Settlement, and Collection
(Accreditation Standard X C)

Each institution must publish its policy for retaining tuition payments when students decide to cancel their enrollment. Any money due the student must be refunded within 30 days of the cancellation request, which may be conveyed in any manner. At a minimum, the policy must provide that:

1. Students who cancel within five days after enrolling will receive a refund of all money paid to the school.

2. To offset its administrative costs, the school may designate a percentage of the total course tuition as a non-refundable fee (often termed registration or similar name) which it may retain if the student

cancels after five days but before submitting a completed lesson assignment. The amount so allocated may be either $50 or 15 percent of the total course tuition, not to exceed $150. After the receipt of at least one lesson assignment, the school may augment this non-refundable fee by retaining the appropriate percentage (see below) of the **refundable tuition amount** (total course tuition minus the non-refundable fee).

3. Where the student cancels after completing at least one lesson assignment but less than 50 percent of course assignments, the school may retain a percentage of refundable tuition which shall not exceed the following:

   a. Up to and including 10 percent of the course, 10 percent of the refundable tuition (tuition charges remaining after subtracting the non-refundable fee already retained).

   b. Between 10 percent and 25 percent of the course, 25 percent of the refundable tuition.

   c. Between 25 percent and 50 percent of the course, 50 percent of the refundable tuition.

   d. After the student completes more than half the course, the school shall be entitled to retain the entire total course tuition.

   The amount of the course completed shall be the ratio of completed lesson assignments received by the institution to the total lesson assignments required to completed the course.

4. The following applies as a minimum policy for combination distance study/mandatory resident training courses.

   a. For a course which includes mandatory resident training, the tuition price for the distance study portion and the tuition price for the resident portion must be separately stated on the enrollment agreement. The total of the two is the Total Course Price.

   b. For cancellation and settlement for the distance study portion of the combination course Section III B, subsections 1 and 3 above apply.

   c. For the mandatory resident portion of the course, the following applies as a minimum policy: After the student attends the first resident class session, if the student requests cancellation, the school shall be entitled to a tuition charge which shall not exceed the following:

      (1) Up to and including completion of the first 10 percent of the resident training, 10 percent of the tuition.

      (2) After completing more than 10 percent of resident training and up to and including completion of 25 percent of the resident training, 25 percent of the tuition.

(3) After completing more than 25 percent of the resident training and up to and including completion of 50 percent of the resident training, 50 percent of the tuition.

(4) If the student completes more than half of the resident training, the full tuition.

The amount of resident training completed shall be the number of days the student attends resident training as compared to the total days of the resident training program.

5. Courses which include optional resident training, seminars, or other resident training sessions are subject to Section III B 4 above. Separate charges may not be made for optional resident training.

6. Upon cancellation, a student whose tuition is paid in full is entitled to receive all course materials, including kits and equipment.

7. In the case of student illness or accident, death in the family, or other circumstances beyond the control of the student, the student shall be entitled to special consideration and the school may settle the account for an amount which is a lesser charge to the student than that called for by the school's established policy.

8. Correspondence regarding cancellation and settlement between the student and the school, banks, collection agencies, lawyers, or any other third persons representing the school must clearly acknowledge the existence of the cancellation and settlement policy of the school.

9. If promissory notes or enrollment agreements are sold or discounted to third parties, the school must still comply with the minimum cancellation and settlement policy outlined in this section.

10. Collection procedures used by the school or third parties must reflect ethical business practices.

Revised January 1997

The Accrediting Commission has adopted the following *Code of Ethics:*

Code of Ethics
for Sales Representatives
of
Accredited Distance Education Institutions

As a sales representative of an accredited distance education school, I recognize that I have certain responsibilities toward students, the public, and my school. To fulfill these responsibilities, I pledge adherence to this Code of Ethics.

I will observe fully the standards, rules, policies, and guidelines established by my school, the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, the State Education Agency, and other legally authorized agencies.

* * *

I will adhere to high ethical standards in the conduct of my work, and to the best of my ability, will:

1. Observe fully the rights of all applicants and commit no action that would be detrimental to any applicant's opportunity to enroll because of race, sex, color, creed, or national origin.

2. Never knowingly make any false or misleading representation to any applicant nor use any coercive practices in presenting information.

3. Enroll applicants only in the course or courses in which they have expressed their interest, provided they meet the qualifications and standards established by my school for enrollment.

4. Provide applicants only with information authorized by my school regarding the occupational opportunities for graduates.

5. State accurately and clearly to prospective students the approvals, accreditation, business and employer recognition, and course acceptance accorded to my school.

6. Never use tuition assistance available from a governmental agency or other source as the primary inducement for enrollment.

7. Refrain at all times from making any statement or inference that might falsely impugn the integrity or value of any other school, method of training, profession, or institution.

8. Discharge faithfully, and to the best of my ability, all of the duties and obligations and procedures established by my school for my position and know all of my obligations and rights as a school representative.

9. Reflect at all times the highest credit upon myself, my school, and the field of distance education and always strive to enhance the reputation of my profession through my conduct as a distance study school representative.

G. Other Forms

		# of Pages
1.	Application for Accreditation **[changed 1/96]**	2
2.	Annual Report **[revised 1/97]**	4
3.	Teach-Out Commitment (Non-Corporate Entities)	1
4.	Teach-Out Commitment (Corporate Entities)	1
5.	Application for Appeal or Reconsideration **[revised 1/97]**	2

Application for Accreditation

Name of Institution: _____

Address of Institution: _____
(Street Address) (City, State) (ZIP)

Telephone No.: _____ Fax No.: _____ Date: _____
(Area Code) (Area Code)

Please answer the following questions (attach additional sheets as necessary):

Year institution established: _____

Date of enrollment of first distance education/correspondence student: _____

Active distance education students: _____ Combination course resident students: _____

Number of new enrollments in last calendar year: _____

List title of each distance education course offered. Please identify courses which include residential training (combination courses) with an asterisk. Use supplemental sheets as necessary.

Name of Course or Major Curriculum	Credential, Diploma, Degree Offered

List locations of resident training sites and other school locations:

Name of Site	Address

List the state(s) in which the institution is licensed or approved: _____

List other accrediting agencies which accredit your institution, with date of original accreditation and the most recent action.

Agency	Dates

Has the institution ever resigned accreditation or had accreditation denied or terminated (including DETC)?

Yes____ No____ Please list agency and date: _____

Are sales representatives employed? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, how many? _____

List states in which sales representatives are active: _____

Application Checklist

Yes

_____ Enclosed with this application is a check for $300 payable to the "Distance Education and Training Council."

_____ Enclosed are the names and addresses **(on self-adhesive mailing labels)** of the first 100 students consecutively enrolled with our institution beginning the first day of the 18th month preceding the date of this application. Insofar as possible, the number of the students reflects the same proportion of the enrollments for each of our institution's major course offerings.

_____ We will mail the appropriate number of complete sets of our course materials packaged as indicated in the instructions by the date set by the Executve Secretary.

_____ The appropriate number of Self-Evaluation Reports will be submitted by the date set by the Executive Secretary.

Once the *Application for Accreditation* is received, the Executive Secretary will notify you of the appropriate due dates for submitting your course materials and the Self-Evaluation Report. An on-site review date will normally be scheduled to take place within six to eight weeks of receipt of the SER. Would you prefer a ❒ Spring (Feb. - April) or ❒ Fall (Aug. - Oct.) visit? [added 1/96]

This institution understands, in submitting this application, that the accreditation process includes surveys of and inquiries to students, sales representatives, state and federal consumer and regulatory agencies, employers of graduates, and other individuals, agencies, or groups which may have an opinion about the institution, its programs, and its services. It agrees to such surveys and inquiries and will assist the Accrediting Commission in conducting them.

Further, this institution certifies that it meets the Commission's definition of a distance education institution as found in the publication "DETC Accreditation Handbook," and that prior to this date, it has had at least two continuous years of successful operation as a bona fide distance education institution.

I certify that all of the information on this application is true and correct.

Institution's President or CEO: _____

Name Title

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Submit this form to: Executive Secretary (address below). 232

Revised January 1996

1996 Annual Report

Annual Report to the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council

Name of Institution:_____

Address:_____
(Street Address) (City, State) (ZIP)

Telephone No.:_____ Fax No.:_____

E-Mail:_____ Home Page:_____

This Annual Report covers the institution's activities from January 1-December 31, 1996. Please attach any additional pages or documentation to this form.

I. Courses and Programs Offered

Title	# of Lessons	Length*	Tuition	1996 Enrollments

(Please continue on separate sheet)

*Length should be expressed in months it takes the typical student to complete the course.

II. Certification of Compliance with Commission Requirements

To certify that your institution has complied with Accrediting Commission policies and procedures, PLEASE INITIAL each space below. For areas where it is not possible to certify compliance, please provide an explanation and corrected information as may be required.

I certify that this institution has:

Your Initials

_____ Reported changes of ownership, management, or control.

_____ Reported changes in location (including training sites).

_____ Reported significant changes in financial condition.

_____ Developed accounting procedures to take into account or reserve prepaid tuition of students due future services.

_____ Reviewed enrollment agreements—including tuition refund language—for compliance with Accrediting Commission standards.

(continued)

Your Initials

_____ Reported all lawsuits, investigations, audits, actions, or other formal inquiries by governmental bodies or legal authorities.

_____ Submitted for Accrediting Commission review all **new** courses or courses undergoing **significant** revisions and arranged for review of all new training sites.

_____ Reviewed advertising and promotional literature for compliance with standards and submitted for review all significant changes in marketing techniques.

_____ Ensured that tuition refund policies are in accord with the DETC Business Standards and paid all tuition refunds due (except as noted on an attached sheet).

III. Report on Education and Student Services

Use any additional sheets as necessary to respond to the questions below.

1. Report on additional sheets any **significant** changes to the faculty at the supervisor/management level. For any reported changes, provided brief description of the qualifications of any new faculty. Report other significant changes to faculty assignments, workload, in-house training conducted, etc.

2. Report—and explain the reason for—any **significant** fluctuations (plus or minus 25% or more since last Annual Report) in institution enrollments. Describe, for significantly large increases, what additional staff and support resources have been employed to meet the demands of the increased enrollment.

3. Report any **significant** changes to tuition levels, payment options, collection techniques, or refund policies since the last Annual Report.

4. Report any **significant** changes to course/program admissions policies made since the last Annual Report. What requirements have been added or dropped? Provide the rationale for any changes listed.

5. For existing approved courses/ programs (those not submitted for initial approval over the past year) describe any **significant** changes or revisions (i.e., changes in text, media used, equipment, etc.) made. Describe also any new student services added to support existing courses/programs.

(continued)

IV. Report on Financial Condition

Please fill out the chart below. **In the event** the entries for lines 4 or 5 for 1996 are negative amounts, then you must attach to this Annual Report the current, most recent comparative Financial Statement for the institution. As a minimum, the report must cover a 12 month period and must be prepared in conformity with "generally accepted accounting principles." The statement must use the *accrual method* for recognizing income.

Provide the following summarized financial highlights for your distance education operations for the most recent two fiscal year periods.

Fiscal Year Ended:	**1996**	**1995**
1. Revenues		
2. Net Income (Loss)		
3. Total Assets		
4. Working Capital (Deficit)*	**	
5. Total Equity/Fund Balance (Deficit)	**	

*Current Assets minus Current Liabilities.
** Attach **complete** financial statement if entry is negative.

PLEASE NOTE: For every accredited institution, the Accrediting Commission reserves the right to require the submission of complete financial statements as it is deemed necessary.

V. Summary of Institution's Plans

Please give a brief summary of your plans for the coming year in the following areas:

1. New courses or programs. List new courses you are preparing or considering and the estimated date of submission to the Accrediting Commission for review.

(continued)

2. Training sites. Indicate plans for new training sites (with projected class starting dates) and any changes in location for present sites.

3. Changes in marketing and promotional tactics or procedures. Describe.

Date

Signature of Chief Executive Officer

This report must be received by the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council by ***February 14, 1997.***

Revised January 1997

Teach-Out Commitment
(Non-Corporate Entities)

Commitment to the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council to Teach-Out Students

"WHEREAS, _____ of _____
(Institution Name) (Address)

applied to the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council for accreditation, and achieved such accreditation,

"WHEREAS, said accreditation applies to every distance education course, division and activity, including the residential component of any combination distance study-resident courses,

"NOW, THEREFORE, be it is RESOLVED and COMMITTED that:

One *The undersigned commit(s) that all students who enroll in this organization's programs will receive all of the training under the terms of their contracts, including receiving all learning materials on a timely basis, any subsequent change in this organization's accredited status or any other circumstances notwithstanding; and,*

Two *With the understanding that the intent of this Commitment is to assure that all students enrolled by this organization before and during its period of accreditation will have the opportunity to complete their programs regardless of future circumstances, it is firmly resolved that the letter and spirit of this Commitment will be fulfilled."*

I (we), the undersigned, certify that I (we) own the majority interest in _____ and pledge that I (we) have adopted and will fulfill the terms of the foregoing Commitment.

Given under my hand and the seal of the organization in the City or County of _____, State of _____, this_____day of _____, 19_____.

_____
Signature

_____
Title

Impress Organization Seal Here

Teach-Out Commitment
(Corporate Entities)

Commitment to the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council to Teach-Out Students

"WHEREAS, _____ of _____
(Institution Name) (Address)

applied to the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council for accreditation, and achieved such accreditation,

"WHEREAS, said accreditation applies to every distance education course, division and activity, including the residential component of any combination distance study-resident courses,

"NOW, THEREFORE, upon motion duly made and seconded and unanimously adopted, it is RESOLVED and COMMITTED that:

One *This organization commits that all students who enroll in this organization's programs will receive all of the training under the terms of their contracts, including receiving all learning materials on a timely basis, any subsequent change in this organization's accredited status or any other circumstances notwithstanding; and,*

Two *With the understanding that the intent of this Commitment is to assure that all students enrolled by this organization before and during its period of accreditation will have the opportunity to complete their programs regardless of future circumstances, it is firmly resolved that the letter and spirit of this Commitment will be fulfilled."*

I certify that this Commitment was duly and legally adopted at a regular (special) meeting of _____ _____, duly and regularly convened and held at _____ on the _____ day of _____, 19____, at which a quorum of the Board of Directors was present and acting throughout; and that said Commitment will continue in full force and effect.

Given under my hand and the seal of the organization in the City or County of _____, State of _____, this_____day of _____, 19_____.

_____
Signature

Impress Organization Seal Here

_____
Title

January 1995

Application for Appeal or Reconsideration

Application for Appeal or Reconsideration of a Commission Decision

Name of Institution:_____

Address of Institution:_____
(Street Address) (City, State) (ZIP)

Telephone No: _____ Fax No.:_____ Today's Date:_____
(Area Code) (Area Code)

Check One:

We hereby elect to undergo a: ❒ Appeal Hearing ❒ Reconsideration Hearing

(Please refer to the *DETC Accreditation Handbook* for complete information on the above options.)

Appeal or Reconsideration Procedures

1. The institution submits this Application for an appeal or reconsideration to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission within 10 days of the receipt of the Commission's written statement advising the institution of the decision to deny or withdraw accreditation. The appeal fee must accompany this Application.

2. The institution submits a written statement of the grounds for its request for an appeal or reconsideration within 14 days of receipt of the Commission's written statement advising of its action.

3. The institution's accounts, including hearing and transcript fees, with the Distance Education and Training Council and the Accrediting Commission must be paid in full at least 10 days before the date of the hearing.

4. The Commission will schedule the hearing and will designate the time and place the hearing will be held.

5. The institution has the opportunity to make an oral presentation at the hearing. The oral presentation may not exceed 20 minutes. If applicable, please list below those who will be attending the hearing on behalf of the institution:

(Name)	(Title)	(Affiliation)
(Name)	(Title)	(Affiliation)
(Name)	(Title)	(Affiliation)

(continued)

6. The institution, at its option and its expense, shall have the right to the presence of its own legal counsel at, and a transcript of, its oral presentation at the hearing.

   ❒ I would like a transcript ($250 deposit).
   ❒ Our legal counsel will be attending the hearing.

   Name of Counsel: _____

   Firm: _____ Phone No.: _____ (Area Code)

   Address: _____

7. If the institution has elected to undergo an **appeal hearing**, it may nominate one individual (either a former Commissioner or any bona fide executive officer of an accredited institution, other than the institution making the appeal) to serve on the three member appeal panel (see *DETC Accreditation Handbook* for qualifications). The Accrediting Commission will coordinate hearing details with this individual.

   Nomination: _____

8. The institution may submit written material pertaining to the appeal or reconsideration up to 10 days prior to the hearing date. New documents or materials may **not** be presented for the Commission's consideration at the time of the institution's oral presentation at the hearing.

9. Within 10 days following the conclusion of the appeal or reconsideration hearing, the Commission shall send the institution a written statement advising of the action **and the basis for that action [added 1/97]** on the appeal or reconsideration.

I certify that all of the information on this application is true and correct:

Institution's President or CEO: _____

Signature: _____

Application Checklist

❒ Fee attached ($3,000)
❒ Optional fee for transcript deposit ($250)
❒ Written grounds for appeal or reconsideration
❒ Names of those attending appeal hearing

Submit this form to: Executive Secretary (address below).

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H. Other Policies and Procedures

		# of Pages
1.	Advising the Institution of Commission Decisions **[revised 1/97]**	4
2.	Policy on Commission-Requested Financial Statements	2
3.	Policy on Complaints	3
4.	Retention of Commission Files and Records	2
5.	Adopting and Promulgating Standards and Policies	3

Advising the Institution of Commission Decisions

Procedure for Considering the Chair's Report and the Response and Advising the Institution of Commission Decisions on Accreditation and Procedure for Appealing a Negative Commission Decision on Accreditation

I. Procedure to provide the institution with the *Examining Committee Chair's Report,* to allow the institution to respond to the Chair's Report, and to notify the institution of the Commission's decision.

A. Following the visit of the Examining Committee to the institution, the Chair of the Examining Committee shall prepare a Chair's Report which will be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission. The Executive Secretary will send the Chair's Report to the chief executive officer of the institution prior to its submission to the Accrediting Commission. This Chair's Report (hereafter called Report) will describe the findings of the Examining Committee and comment upon the institution's demonstrated compliance with, or failure to demonstrate compliance with, the standards and policies of the Commission.

B. The institution shall have 14 days from the receipt of the Report to comment upon the Report and to submit additional written material it desires to place before the Accrediting Commission in response to the Report.

C. The institution shall have the opportunity to make an oral presentation to the Accrediting Commission at the meeting at which the institution is considered. The oral presentation will be based on the Report and the written material which the institution has submitted. If the institution desires to make an oral presentation, the institution must make the request in writing not less than 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. The institution at its option and its expense shall have the right to the presence of its counsel at, and a transcript of, such oral presentation.

D. The Commission requires, in advance, the names and affiliations of those appearing to make the oral presentation, and shall set the time, place, and amount of time allotted for such oral presentation.

E. The Accrediting Commission will consider the institution and make its decision.

F. The Executive Secretary shall advise the chief executive officer of the institution of the decision of the Commission.

G. When the decision of the Commission is to deny or withdraw accreditation, the chief executive officer of the institution will be notified of the decision within 10 days following the date of the action by the Commission. The notification will include a written statement indicating the standards, policies, or conditions for continued accreditation the institution was found not to meet. The notification will also

(continued)

advise the chief executive officer of the institution's right to appeal or request reconsideration of the decision of the Commission.

H. When the Commission denies or withdraws the accreditation of an accredited institution, the action shall not be made public by the Commission, except as noted in I. J. below, until the period for requesting a reconsideration or appeal expires without the institution making such a request or until the reconsideration or appeal is denied.

I. When the Commission denies an initial application for accreditation or defers taking action to accredit or re-accredit, the action shall not be made public.

J. When the Commission withdraws accreditation from an accredited institution or when an accredited institution resigns or lets its accreditation lapse, **the U.S. Secretary of Education [added 1/97],** the governmental bodies licensing, approving, or otherwise providing the legal authority for the institution's operation will be notified **at the same time the Commission notifies the Chief Executive Officer of the affected institution [added 1/97].** In cases involving withdrawal actions, this notification shall advise the governmental bodies that the institution may request that the action be reconsidered or appealed and that the action shall not be made public except as noted in I. H. above.

II. Procedure for requesting reconsideration or appealing a Commission decision to deny or withdraw accreditation.

A. The institution may request **reconsideration** of the action of the Commission or **appeal** the action. The request for reconsideration or appeal shall be made in writing to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission within 10 days of the receipt of the written statement advising the chief executive officer of the institution of the decision to deny or withdraw accreditation. The Appeals Fee must accompany the institution's request for reconsideration or appeal. The institution shall file a written statement of the grounds for its request for reconsideration or appeal. This must be done within 14 days of receipt of the notification of the Commission's action. An institution deciding to challenge the Commission's action must choose **either** to request reconsideration of the action **or** to appeal the action. Final action on reconsideration is not subject to appeal and final action on appeal is not subject to reconsideration.

B. The institution's accounts must be paid in full at least 10 days before the date of the hearing. The institution's failure to have its accounts paid in full by this date shall be deemed a waiver of its right of reconsideration or appeal and cause the Commission's action to become final.

C. The processes of reconsideration and appeal provide the institution having accreditation denied or withdrawn the choice of one of two alternatives for challenging the Commission's action. Choosing reconsideration allows the institution to make changes and provide new information to the Commission. The choice to appeal the decision limits the institution to what is in the Commission's record and the way in which the Commission carried out its own policies and procedures.

(continued)

1. The Reconsideration Process

   a. The institution's request for reconsideration is heard by the Accrediting Commission as noted in II. D., E. and F. below.

   b. The grounds for the request for reconsideration may include material not in the record before the Commission when the decision was made to deny accreditation or re-accreditation. The grounds may also include evidence showing that the institution has been brought into compliance with the specific standards or policies identified as the basis for the Commission's decision. The grounds for the request for reconsideration may not challenge the reasonableness of the Accrediting Commission's published standards, policies, or procedures.

   c. In reconsidering its action to deny or withdraw accreditation, the Accrediting Commission may: set aside its action and accredit or continue the institution's accreditation; set aside its action and accredit or continue accreditation with stipulations which the institution must agree to meet within a stated time period; or sustain its original decision. If the decision to deny or withdraw accreditation is sustained, the Commission's action is final and the institution may not appeal.

2. The Appeal Process

   a. The institution's appeal is heard by an independent panel as noted in II. D., E. and F. below. The panel consists of three members. The members are: two members appointed by the Accrediting Commission from a list of former Commissioners and one member appointed by the institution making the appeal. One of the Commission-appointed members is designated Chair. The institution-appointed member is either a former Commissioner or any bona fide executive officer of an institution, other than the institution making the appeal, currently an accredited member of the Distance Education and Training Council. A vote by at least a majority of this panel either remands the decision for a fresh review by the Commission or denies the appeal.

   b. The institution must set forth the specific grounds for its appeal and state the reasons the institution believes the adverse decision should be remanded for a fresh review. In making its appeal, the institution must endeavor to show that the Commission's decision resulted from errors or omissions in the carrying out of Commission policies and procedures. The appeals panel will consider the grounds for the appeal, the institution's oral presentation, and the record that was before the Commission when it made the decision to deny accreditation or re-accreditation.

   c. The institution's appeal may not challenge the reasonableness of the Accrediting Commission's published standards, policies, or procedures, since the appeals panel has no authority in this area.

(continued)

d. If the panel denies the appeal, the Commission's decision stands. If the panel upholds the appeal, it will state the reasons and remand the decision to the Accrediting Commission for a fresh review.

e. The appeals panel cannot reverse a decision of the Commission. A decision to remand the decision binds the Commission to a fresh review. In any such review, the decision of the Commission will be final.

D. The Commission shall schedule the reconsideration or appeal hearing and shall designate the time and place the hearing will be held.

E. At the reconsideration or appeal hearing the institution shall have the opportunity to make an oral presentation. The oral presentation shall not exceed twenty minutes. If the institution desires to make an oral presentation, the chief executive officer of the institution should make the request in writing to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission not less than 10 days prior to the date of the hearing. The names and affiliations of those appearing to make the oral presentation must be included with the request. Written material pertaining to the reconsideration or appeal may be submitted up to 10 days prior to the hearing date. The institution at its option and its expense shall have the right to the presence of its counsel at, and a transcript of, such oral presentation.

F. The reconsideration or appeal hearing is not adversarial and the school does not have the right to cross-examine. The oral presentation should provide information relevant to the specific grounds for the reconsideration or appeal. Written material may not be presented for the Commission's consideration at the time of the oral presentation.

G. Within 10 days following the conclusion of the reconsideration or appeal hearing, the Commission shall send the institution a written statement advising of the action **and the basis for that action [added 1/97]** on the reconsideration or appeal.

H. When the action on the reconsideration or appeal results in the withdrawal of accreditation from an accredited institution, notice of the action **shall be communicated to the U.S. Secretary of Education and appropriate governmental authorities at the same time the Commission notifies the Chief Executive Officer of the affected institution [changed 1/97].**

I. No later than 60 days after a final Accrediting Commission's decision to withdraw accreditation from an institution, the Accrediting Commission will make available to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing entity, and the public, upon request, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the Accrediting Commission's withdrawal of accreditation of an institution and any response by the affected institution [added 1/97].

Policy on Commission-Requested Financial Statements

When the Accrediting Commission makes a special request for a financial statement from an accredited or applicant school, the financial statement must be prepared "in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles." This includes the use of accrual method of accounting. The school has the option of submitting to the Accrediting Commission:

1. An audited financial statement, certified by an outside, independent, certified public accountant in accordance with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; or

2. A financial statement (see below) which has been "reviewed" by an outside, independent, certified public accountant in accordance with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

The financial statement should cover the activities of the legal entity which has the responsibility for operating the school.

Minimum Acceptable Financial Statements

As a minimum, the financial statements (audited or reviewed) must be comprised of:

A. **Balance Sheet**, reflecting assets, liabilities, equity, and retained earnings;

B. **Income Statement**, reflecting revenues, expenses, and profits and losses;

C. **Statement of Cash Flows**, reflecting the sources and uses of working capital; and

D. **Explanatory Notes**, which reflect the disclosures required by generally accepted accounting principles.

These statements must be as of the date of the school's most recently ended fiscal year or a date otherwise specified by the Accrediting Commission.

Accounting Review Report: Definition

In lieu of a certified audit, the school may submit a financial statement (see above) which is accompanied by an "accountant's review report." In this case, the statement must be reviewed by an outside, independent,

(continued)

certified public accountant who has conducted a "review" in accordance with the standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

An accounting review consists of inquiries of school management by an outside accountant and includes analytical procedures applied to financial data. It is **less in scope** than an audit and does not have an "opinion" regarding the financial statements. The accountant must, however, state that he or she is not aware of any material modifications that would need to be made to the statements in order for them to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

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January 1995

Policy on Complaints

As a service to students, the public, and member institutions, the DETC has a policy on complaints.

The DETC policy on handling complaints lodged against an accredited member institution or the Accrediting Commission of the DETC is set forth below.

Definition of Complaint

A complaint is defined as a "substantial expression of dissatisfaction" by any person about an institution's courses, services, conduct, or personnel.

Goals of DETC Complaint Policy

The primary goal of the DETC policy on complaints is to achieve a fair resolution. The DETC seeks to offer those lodging a complaint an equitable, fair, and amicable resolution of their problem as promptly as possible, thus mitigating the need for legal or other action.

Our primary concerns in the matter of complaints are the methods, policies, philosophy, and procedures of schools in treating complaints. Another important goal is to assure that DETC accredited schools have operational procedures for fairly and promptly resolving complaints so that they do not become a matter for concern by outside agencies. The DETC places great emphasis on whether or not a school has effective methods for handling student problems on a routine basis and looks to see if a school's procedures are equitable, consistently applied, and effective in solving problems.

The DETC is concerned that similar complaints do not become repetitive or routine. Institutions must be certain that their standard operating procedures identify problems and resolve them **before** they become a matter for third party intervention or brought to the attention of the DETC.

The DETC's complaint procedure is, therefore, initially a membership service of the DETC. If, however, serious complaints recur or are not promptly handled by the institution, the matter can be referred to the Accrediting Commission, which then performs an in-depth investigation. Ultimately, if the seriousness of, or the failure to handle complaints warrants it, accreditation of the school could be withdrawn by the Commission. The matter could also be called to the attention of state or federal regulatory agencies for action.

For each type of complaint listed below, the DETC will respond with an answer within 30 days. Institutions will be given 15 days to respond to complaints forwarded by the DETC.

Complaints received by DETC fall into three major categories: (1) complaints from students; (2) complaints from outside agencies; and (3) complaints from other accredited schools.

(continued)

1. Complaints Received Directly from Students

The majority of complaints the DETC receives fall into this category. These come to the office by letter and telephone. In the latter case, the students are asked to send the complaint in writing. When written complaints are received, they are read and analyzed, but no formal judgment is made as to the validity of the complaint. Each complaint is acknowledged with a personal letter. The complaint is then forwarded to the appropriate institution official for review.

The letter of transmittal also makes no assumption about the validity of the student's complaint. Rather, information is requested, and it is suggested that the matter be resolved through direct contact with the student. When the school's response to a complaint is received, it is reviewed in light of the original complaint letter and the DETC standards. If the response is satisfactory, the complaint and response are then filed in the institution's file.

If further action may be necessary, the DETC attempts to resolve the matter through further contact with the school. If it is determined after the follow-up contact that the school's action does not result in resolution, the matter is referred to the Accrediting Commission.

2. Complaints Received from Outside Agencies

For complaints received by telephone from outside agencies, the DETC staff will take information about the complaint over the telephone and then request the person to submit written information. In all cases, the complaint is acknowledged and is transmitted to the institution with a personal letter. In some cases where particularly important issues are present, the staff may suggest possible ways of resolving the matter. In most cases, however, the staff merely forwards the complaint to the school with a request for information on which to base a response to the agency. Upon receipt of a response from the school, the agency and the student are notified promptly, usually by the school or, if necessary, by the DETC.

3. Complaints Received from Accredited Institutions

These complaints generally relate to the business practices of competitors. Often, advertising statements are questioned by a competing institution. The complaint is acknowledged upon receipt and the matter is then pursued. In some cases, the matter can become a part of the school's examination by an Accrediting Commission Examining Committee. All complaints in this category receive personal attention and handling by the staff.

(continued)

Complaint Records

The DETC maintains records of all complaints received and the manner of their resolution. These files are considered by the Commission when the school's application for re-accreditation is acted upon. The complaints are analyzed according to how the school handles them. The complaint files are tabulated annually (or more often if frequency warrants), and the nature of each complaint and its source is indicated. When a school accumulates a substantial number of complaints in a given area, the school is advised that there is a problem in that area, and appropriate corrective measures are suggested.

Complaints About Non-Accredited Institutions

Because the DETC is interested in the field of distance education and in the welfare of all distance study students, complaint referral services are extended to students enrolled at non-accredited schools. It should be noted, however, that the Council's authority, and consequently its effectiveness, are limited with respect to non-accredited schools.

Complaints Against the Accrediting Commission of the DETC

Complaints against the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council will be handled by staff. If received orally, the complainant will be invited to submit a written communication. Staff will acknowledge the letter and will undertake an immediate analysis and an investigation as appropriate. The matter will be resolved with a staff response or, if the situation warrants, it can be referred to the Accrediting Commission, if appropriate, for consideration and response.

Retention of Commission Files and Records

Procedure on the Retention of Accrediting Commission Files and Records

The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council conducts the voluntary accreditation program for distance education institutions through an open and frank exchange of information with applicant institutions, members of the Examining Committees, and the Commission.

In order to maintain this free exchange of information (much of it proprietary in nature) the Accrediting Commission has an understanding with applicant institutions and with volunteer evaluators that all data, information, and reports used in the accrediting process are held in the strictest confidence.

To assure that confidentiality is maintained, this procedure will be used by the Accrediting Commission for the retention and protection of information and records:

1. From the time of the receipt of an applicant for accreditation or re-accreditation until the time the Accrediting Commission takes action on such application and that action is accepted or not appealed by the applicant institution, the Accrediting Commission will retain a working file for that applicant institution. This working file includes, but is not limited to, the application; all school reports; individual evaluator and Chairman's reports; correspondence between the Commission, the Examining Committee, the school, and other interested parties; school responses to letters and reports; and other documents related to the application.

2. When the Accrediting Commission takes action on an applicant institution and the institution has accepted the action of the Commission, the Commission will maintain in its files one copy of each of the following until the Commission completes the next full review of the school:

   A. Application for Accreditation
   B. Examination Schedule
   C. Self-Evaluation Report
   D. Chair's Report
   E. Institution's response to the Chair's Report
   F. Commission letter notifying the institution of the action and the institution's response to this letter
   G. Follow-up Progress Report

   The Commission will destroy all other documents.

(continued)

3. When the Accrediting Commission takes action to deny, withdraw, or terminate accreditation for an applicant institution and after the action is accepted by the institution, the time for appeal expires or the school's appeal is denied, the Commission will retain in its files one copy of each document listed in 2 A through G above, for a period of one year. After one year, only the documents listed in 7 A through C below will be retained.

4. When the Accrediting Commission decides to defer action on a new application for accreditation, all documents listed in 1 above will be retained for a period of one year. If the applicant does not pursue the application within that time, only the documents listed in 7 A through C below will be retained.

5. When an institution makes application for accreditation and the application is not perfected, all documents related to the applicant will be retained for a period of one year. After one year, only the available documents listed in 7 A through C below will be retained.

6. When an accredited institution resigns from accreditation and the resignation is accepted by the Commission, only the documents listed in 7 A through C below will be retained.

7. Except for the following, the school's previous record with the Commission will be destroyed if the documentation is related to a prior distinct, completed accreditation action. The documents that will be retained permanently are:

    A. Application of Accreditation
    B. Examination Schedule
    C. Chair's Report and the institution's response

8. The institution's Annual Report to the Accrediting Commission will be destroyed after a two year period.

9. The minutes of each Accrediting Commission meeting will be retained permanently.

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Procedure for Adopting and Promulgating Accrediting Commission Standards and Policies for the Accreditation of Distance Education Schools

Background

The Accrediting Commission has the power and responsibility to establish and promulgate criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of distance education schools. These criteria take the form of Accreditation Standards, Policies, and Procedures followed by the Commission as it evaluates and accredits schools. The criteria are under continual review and changes are made as appropriate and as required.

Origin of Standards and Policies

The Accrediting Commission will consider recommendations for Accreditation Standards and Policies that come to it from any source in any manner or form. The following will be the normal sources for such recommendations:

1. The regular review of existing Accreditation Standards and Policies by the Commission and its staff and needs found by the Commission and its staff in the conduct of the work of the Commission;
2. The Standing Committees of the Distance Education and Training Council on recommendation of the Distance Education and Training Council Board of Trustees;
3. Reports and evaluations by members of the Accrediting Examining Committees and Observers;
4. Governmental agencies with responsibilities and interest in students, schools, and the accreditation process;
5. Consumer oriented groups surveyed as a part of the accreditation process;
6. Accredited schools;
7. Applicant schools;
8. Students and the general public through surveys made as part of the accreditation process, complaints, and correspondence received by the Commission;
9. Editors, writers, publishers, industry representatives, and employers of students trained through distance education.

(continued)

Adoption of Accreditation Standards and Policies

Recommendations for new Accreditation Standards and Policies or changes in existing Standards and Policies are considered by the Commission. Recommended Accreditation Standards and Policies approved by the Commission are called "Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies."

The Commission gives advance notice and opportunity to comment on proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies. Persons, institutions, and organizations affected by or with an interest in the Commission standards and policies will be advised of Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies and of the date they will be given final consideration by the Commission. They will be advised in DETC Bulletins and other publications mailed to the sources for recommendations listed above. Comments will be solicited.

After publication of the Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies, interested persons, institutions, and organizations will be given at least 30 days to file written comments with the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission. Interested persons, institutions, and organizations will be given the opportunity to appear before the Commission to present oral comments on the date indicated. Notice of the desire to appeal must be filed with the Executive Secretary at least 10 days prior to the meeting date. Oral presentations will be not more than 30 minutes in length, and written comments and a summary of the oral presentation must be filed with the Executive Secretary prior to the appearance.

The Accrediting Commission, after considering written comments and hearing oral presentations, will take action on the Proposed Accreditation Standards and Policies. The Commission can adopt Accreditation Standards and Policies as proposed, adopt with changes or modifications, defer action until further study and consideration is given, or reject the Proposed Accreditation Standards outright. When Accreditation Standards and Policies are adopted, the Commission will set the date that they will become effective, providing a reasonable time for school compliance.

Promulgation of Accreditation Standards and Policies

The Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission will announce Accreditation Standards and Policies adopted by the Commission and take the action necessary for their implementation. The effective date and procedures for implementation, if required, will be included in the announcement.

1. Information on new Accreditation Standards and Policies will be published in DETC Bulletins and publications mailed to the sources for recommendations listed above.

2. The relevant publications of the Accrediting Commission will be revised to include the new Accreditation Standards. Changes will be made to the DETC Business Standards as required.

3. Commission Policies will be published and made available as required for their implementation.

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Comments and Suggestions on Accreditation Standards and Policies

Interested persons, institutions, and organizations are encouraged to submit comments on existing Accreditation Standards and Policies and make suggestions for additions or revisions. Comments and suggestions should be sent to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission.

I. Fees

		# of Pages
1.	Accreditation Fees **[changed 1/97]**	4
2.	DETC Dues **[changed 1/96]**	2
3.	Computation for Dues and Fees Form **[added 1/97]**	1

Accreditation Fees

The Application, Visitation, Review, and Appeals Fees apply for schools seeking initial accreditation, accredited schools undergoing the five year re-accreditation review, schools undergoing special examinations or visits directed by the Commission, and schools appealing negative Commission decisions on accreditation. The fees apply for the review of new or revised courses of accredited schools including remedial programs, for the review of admissions tests, and for the validation of course length. They also apply for visits made when accredited schools move to new locations or request approval of new or alternate training sites, and for visits made because of changes of ownership or marketing approach.

The Annual Fees apply for all accredited schools.

The Accrediting Commission will not give favorable consideration to a school unless its account is paid in full. Accreditation Fees are not refundable.

I. Application, Visitation, Review, Training Site, and Appeals Fees

A. Application Fee

An Application Fee of $300 will be charged schools seeking accreditation or re-accreditation. The Application Fee must accompany the "Application for Accreditation."

B. Visitation Fee

A Visitation Fee will be charged for the visit of the Examining Committee to the school at the rate of $900 for each committee member making the visit for each day of the examination, including travel days between separate divisions or offices of the school being examined. The size of the Examining Committee will be determined by the size of the school and the number of courses offered. Subject Specialist Evaluators visiting the school, the Accrediting Commission Observer, and the Staff Observer will be considered members of the Examining Committee.

A statement for the Visitation Fee will be sent to the school, and payment is due before the visit is made. Following the visit, adjustments will be made based on the number of examiners present.

C. Visitation Fee for Academic Degree Programs

A Visitation Fee will be charged for the visit of the Examining Committee to a school with an academic degree program at the rate of $1,200 for each committee member making the visit for each day of the examination, including travel days between separate divisions or offices of the school being examined. For the visit to a school with both degree and non-degree programs, the $1,200 Visitation Fee will be charged for committee members primarily responsible for the examination of the degree program.

(continued)

A statement for the Visitation Fee for Degree Programs will be sent to the school, and payment is due before the visit is made. Following the visit, adjustments will be made based on the number of examiners present.

D. Subject Specialist Fee

A Subject Specialist Fee of $500 will be charged per Subject Specialist for each review of a new or revised course. If the course is part of a degree program, a $750 fee will be charged per Subject Specialist for each course. If the Subject Specialist visits the school, the Visitation Fee (see above) will also be charged. The Subject Specialist Fee will be charged for each Subject Specialist reviewing new or revised courses submitted by an accredited school, including remedial programs and requests for the approval of admissions tests and the validation of course length.

E. Courses Receiving "C" Ratings

If a course receives by a Subject Specialists any "C" ratings, the "Course Does Not Meet Standards" and cannot be approved at that time. The institution may pay the following fees for the appropriate option (see "*Options for Course Receiving Any "C" Rating*" in Appendix D. 2):

1. Make Changes and Re-Submit: $250
2. Request New Reviewer: $500
3. Send to Third Evaluator: $500
4. Withdraw Course: No Charge

F. Training Site Approval Fee

A request for the review of a proposed training site of an accredited school must be accompanied by a Training Site Approval Fee of $500. The Visitation Fee will also be charged for the visit to the training site.

G. Non-U.S. Institutions

The school will pay the actual cost of the review including trael expenses of the visiting committee, fees for course reviews, and the appropriate honoraria plus a 15 percent administrative fee. The applicant will be sent an estimated fee which must be paid (in U.S. funds drawn from a U.S. Bank) prior to the visit. Adjustments will be made following the visit [added 1/97].

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H. Appeals Fee

When an institution appeals a negative decision on accreditation under the procedure set forth in *DETC Accreditation Handbook,* an Appeals Fee of $3,000 must accompany the written request for the appeal. The failure to pay this fee or to bring the school's account current at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled appeals hearing shall be deemed a waiver of the institution's right to appeal and causes the Commission's negative decision to become final.

I. Oral Presentation Transcript Fee

A school making an appearance before the Commission to make oral presentation under the procedure set forth in *DETC Accreditation Handbook,* Appendix H. 1, will be charged the actual cost of any transcript of the oral presentation which it may elect to have made (including one copy of the transcript for the Accrediting Commission).

II. Annual Fees

Each school will pay an annual Accreditation Fee based on the total annual cash collections from home study enrollments received by the school during the preceding calendar year. This annual fee is separate from and in addition to the annual dues for membership in the Distance Education and Training Council.

The Accreditation Fee schedule is:

Total Cash Collections	
Under $100,000	$200
$100,000 to $249,999	$400
$250,000 to $499,999	$650
$500,000 to $749,999	$1,000
$750,000 to $999,999	$1,500
$1,000,000 to $1,999,999	$2,000
$2,000,000 to $2,999,999	$2,750
$3,000,000 and over	$3,500

An accredited school with no tuition income will be charged an Annual Accreditation Fee, up to $3,500, established by the Accrediting Commission for the school or category of schools.

(continued)

III. Listing Fee

The name of **each** accredited school and the name of **each** of its separately advertised divisions or courses must appear alphabetically in the Accrediting Commission's list of accredited schools (*Directory of Accredited Institutions*). The Annual Accreditation Fee covers **one** school listing. A fee of either one half of the school's Annual Accreditation Fee or $1,250, whichever is less, will be charged for each additional listing.

DETC Dues

According to the Constitution and Bylaws for the Distance Education and Training Council, Article IV, Section 2:

> "Annual dues shall be eighty-six hundredths of one percent (.86% or .0086) of school cash collections up to $3,500,000, but in no case shall an organization pay dues of less than $750. For school cash collections exceeding $3,500,000, the organization shall pay $550 per million or part thereof. Subsequent changes in dues shall be based on the .86 percent amount and shall be stated as a percentage of organization cash collections."

Late Payment of Dues and Fees

If Dues and Fees are not paid in full by April 30th, an interest charge of 1½% per month (18% per year) will be charged on the outstanding Dues and Fees balance. If a Dues and Fees balance remains as of September 30th, the institution will be subject to a special accreditation examination [added 1/96].

Refund Policy for Dues

The DETC Board of Trustees adopted the following refund policy on Dues for DETC schools:

If a school involuntarily loses its accreditation within the first Quarter of a fiscal year (April 1—June 30), it will be refunded 75% of its dues. If a school loses its accreditation the second Quarter of a fiscal year (July 1—September 30), it will be refunded 50% of its dues. If a school loses its accreditation after the second Quarter of a fiscal year (October 1—March 31), the school will not receive a refund.

If a school withdraws from membership or accreditation, threatens or is in litigation with the Council or the Accrediting Commission, no refunds will be made. Annual Accreditation and Listing Fees are not refundable.

Sample of Computations of Dues and Fees

For a listing of Accreditation Fees, please see Appendix I. 1.

1. ABC School's reported cash collections for a calendar year were $52,000. Therefore:

$52,000 x .0086 = $447.20, or the minimum $750	Dues	$750
See Accreditation Fee Schedule	Fees	$200
Total Amount Due		$950

(continued)

2. XYZ School's reported cash collections for a calendar year were $629,752. Therefore:

$629,752 x .0086 = $5,415.86 or $5,416	Dues	$5,416
See Accreditation Fee Schedule	Fees	1,000
School has one additional Directory listing (½ of $1,000 = $500)	Listing Fees	500
Total Amount Due		$6,916

3. John Doe School's reported cash collections for a calendar year were $5,240,000. Therefore:

$5,240,000 - $3,500,000 = 1,740,000. $3,500,000 x .0086 = $30,100 plus $1,740,000 is equal to $2 million. 2 x $550 = $1,100.	Dues	$31,200
See Accreditation Fee Schedule	Fees	3,500
School has 3 additional Directory listings (3 x $1,250 = $3,750)	Listing Fees	3,750
Total Amount Due		$38,450

Revised January 1996

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL

FY 1997-98

Report for Computation of DETC Dues and Fees

1. Name of Institution: _____

2. Total cash collections from distance education enrollments in calendar year 1996: _____
   (This total should include the gross income from all distance study courses and combination distance study and resident courses, including registration fees, tutition, down payments retained by sales representatives, and kits, equipment and merchandise sold as a regular part of the course.)

3. Number of new students enrolled in 1996: _____ (Please enter total from below)

   Monthly enrollments for 1996:

   January: _____
   February: _____
   March: _____
   April: _____
   May: _____
   June: _____
   July: _____
   August: _____
   September: _____
   October: _____
   November: _____
   December: _____

   Total for 1996:_____

_____
Signature of Officer Making Report

_____
Date

For DETC Office Use Only
CONFIDENTIAL

Please return this form by no later than January 31, 1997 to:
Sally Welch, DETC, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529.

J. Other

		# of Pages
1.	Student Survey Form	2
2.	Tips for the Accrediting Commission Evaluators	2
3.	Standards of Ethics for Accreditation Participants	1
4.	Guidelines for Subject Specialist Evaluators	4
5.	A Special Message to Evaluators of the Confidentiality of DETC Accreditation	1
6.	Questionnaire for On-Site Examiners **[added 1/97]**	1
7.	Guidelines for the On-Site Visit **[added 1/97]**	4

Student Survey Form

Institution Being Surveyed:

Information About You:

Male _____ Female _____ Single _____ Married _____ Your Age _____

How many years of classroom schooling have you completed? _____

What course(s) did you enroll in? _____

Why did you enroll in the course(s)? _____

What is your current status with the course? ❒ Finished ❒ Still Studying ❒ Dropped Out ❒ Never Started

Have you taken a correspondence/distance education course before? ❒ Yes ❒ No If "yes," what institution and course?

_____

Information on Your Experiences:

Yes	No	Sometimes	
___	___	___	Institution's advertising and catalogs accurately describe the course(s).
___	___	___	If contacted by a sales representative, he/she described the institution and course(s) accurately.
___	___	___	Course materials are shipped promptly and received in good condition.
___	___	___	Course materials are up-to-date and accurate.
___	___	___	Course materials adequately cover appropriate topics I need for training in this field.
___	___	___	Instructors are helpful and knowledgeable in answering questions.
___	___	___	Assignments and examinations adequately test my understanding of the course.
___	___	___	Assignments and examinations are promptly graded and returned.
___	___	___	The institution makes an effort to keep me studying.
___	___	___	Student service representatives are helpful.
			Overall, I am satisfied with the—
___	___	___	- course materials
___	___	___	- student services
___	___	___	- institution as a whole
___	___	___	I would take another correspondence/distance education course.
___	___	___	I think it is important that this institution is or becomes accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency.
___	___	___	I would recommend this institution/course to a friend.

Comments:

Based on your experiences with this institution, do you have any suggestions?_____

_____

_____

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

ACCREDITING COMMISSION OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL

1601 18th Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20009-2529 • (202) 234-5100; fax (202) 332-1386 • e-mail detc@detc.org • Internet http://www.detc.org

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SUSAN M. REILLY
ACCREDITING COORDINATOR

Dear Student:

As part of the voluntary accreditation review process, the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council (formerly the National Home Study Council) conducts a survey of students who have enrolled in their member institutions.

We understand that several months ago you enrolled in a course offered by the institution listed on the back of this letter.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey on the other side and return it to us in the enclosed envelope. You do not need to sign the form or identify yourself.

Your response to the survey will help our agency evaluate this institution to see if it meets our high standards of academic quality. You will be helping future generations of students by responding today.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Susan M. Reilly

sr
Enclosure

January 1997

Tips for Accrediting Commission Evaluators

The following are tips to help evaluators prepare and serve on Accrediting Commission examinations:

1. **You are representing the Accrediting Commission.** When you serve as an evaluator, keep in mind that you are serving as a representative of the Accrediting Commission and your duties and responsibilities are primarily to the Commission and the accrediting process. Set a good example.

2. **Commit yourself.** When you accepted the invitation to serve on a Committee, you are committing yourself. Avoid personal business activities that will distract your attention during the visit. Plan to devote the full day (or days) to the evaluation. Most school visits are not concluded until 4:30 p.m. Schedule your return flight so that you can finish the job at the school.

3. **Be reliable and be prompt**. The Committee requires all of its members to be present to function effectively. Read and follow instructions on the Examination Schedule. Arrive at the breakfast meeting on time and ready to begin work. If an emergency does arise, contact the DETC staff member on the Committee or the Commission office so that a substitute can be appointed and arrangements changed.

4. **Be prepared.** Know the Accreditation Standards and use them as your yardstick for evaluation during the examination.

5. **Keep a positive attitude and be business-like.** Seek the facts and remain objective. You were asked to serve as a Committee member because you have demonstrated certain abilities and knowledge. Be reasonable, but don't be overly influenced by other Committee members.

6. **Do your homework.** Arrive fully prepared. Study the Self-Evaluation Report and review the *DETC Accreditation Handbook.* While at the school, keep your *DETC Accreditation Handbook* and the "Examiner's Rating Form for All Institutions" on hand at all times. Use the wording on the rating form when asking questions or seeking information.

7. **Know the school**. Learn as much as you can about the school before the visit. Each school is different. Avoid pre-examination assumptions.

8. **Cover all areas in your assignment.** Don't omit vital areas of the school's operation because you got sidetracked on unimportant details or because you spent too long on one area.

9. **Don't make assumptions of weakness or unworthiness.** Gather factual information and determine if the school does or does not meet the published Accreditation Standards for accredited schools.

(continued)

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

10. **Use the Standards.** Evaluate the school in terms of the Accreditation Standards and mark your rating form. Don't tell school personnel they *must* make any changes. Such actions are the responsibility of the Accrediting Commission.

11. **Don't impose your opinions.** Avoid expressing your opinions or biases on the school you are visiting.

12. **Work as an individual whenever possible.** Committee size is matched to school size and complexity. "Teaming up" with other examiners usually duplicates effort and reduces Committee effectiveness.

13. **Time is valuable.** Avoid socializing, making personal telephone calls, and spending time on activities not pertinent to the examination.

14. **Verify information in the SER.** Avoid asking for information presented in the school's Self-Evaluation Report but do verify information in the SER.

15. **Talk to staff members.** Have direct contact with as many school staff members as possible. Ask different personnel the same questions to verify information.

16. **Keep notes and share findings.** Discuss these with other members of the Committee during the Committee meetings. Suggest questionable areas for confirmation of findings by other examiners. However, avoid lengthy discussions with other examiners. You will learn more by talking with school personnel.

17. **Don't guess outcomes.** Don't express an opinion as to the Commission's probable action on the school's application. Avoid indicating to school personnel your own evaluation or opinion of their practices, policies, or school decisions.

18. **Submit your completed report on time.** Your report will be better if it is prepared while the visit is still fresh in your mind.

19. **Give the school credit.** Mention in your report the things that the school does well. Document any weaknesses.

20. **Keep all data, findings, and reports confidential.** Destroy all reports, data, and materials on the school and the evaluation when you have submitted your report and have been notified by the Commission that your report has been received.

Standards of Ethics for Accreditation Participants

To maintain and preserve the high degree of credibility attached to DETC accreditation, participants in the process (subject specialists, visiting Examining Committee members, Accrediting Commissioners, consultants, administrative staff, and other Commission representatives) should follow the guidance in this document.

1. **Perceptions Matter**. Perceptions, even when inaccurate, can be as damaging to credibility as fact; participants should be alert to how their acts or relationships, or those of their fellow participants, might appear to others. Participants should call to each other's attention any acts or relationships whose potential for misinterpretation could raise questions about the credibility of the accreditation process.

2. **Withdrawal for Financial Relationships**. Where the potential for pecuniary gain or the appearance of it, is involved, as in reporting on or evaluating a current or potential direct competitor or partner, or an institution in which the participant has a financial interest, the participant should excuse himself or herself from the process.

3. **Projecting Impartiality**. Where the appearance of partiality is involved, as in a situation where the participant's relationship with an institution or its principals is such that evaluations or decisions may appear to be unduly influenced by that relationship, the participant should advise the next higher person in the process and consider recusing himself or herself. Guidance should be sought in questionable cases from the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission.

4. **Protecting Confidentiality**. Participants should remain mindful that the accreditation process involves peer review by designated individuals, not their agents, and that confidentiality must be preserved in handling information produced during the process. The use of documents and observations directly related to accreditation should be restricted to participants and not delegated to parties outside the process.

January 1995

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W.,Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

Guidelines for Subject Specialist Evaluators

Welcome . . .

On behalf of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, we extend a warm welcome to you as a Subject Specialist Evaluator.

You have been carefully selected as an evaluator for a distance study school undergoing an accreditation examination. Whether you conduct an "at home" review of course material or accompany an Examining Committee visiting a school, you will play a key role in determining and assuring that only quality distance study programs will be offered to the students of accredited schools. The challenges and responsibilities of this task are great, and we look to you for objective and constructive evaluations of the course materials you will be evaluating.

We are sincerely grateful for the time and effort you will be devoting to this vital work. We trust that you will find this experience to be personally enjoyable and professionally rewarding. We look forward to working with you, and we hope you will find this booklet helpful.

Susan M. Reilly
Accrediting Coordinator

What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is a process whereby an association grants public recognition to a school, institution, college, university, or specialized program as having met certain established qualifications or standards as determined through initial and periodic evaluations. Increasingly, accreditation also implies stimulation toward quality improvement beyond the minimum standards specified by the accrediting body. Summed up, accreditation means the identification of quality schools and the stimulation of professional growth.

The Role of the Subject Specialist Evaluator

The duty of a Subject Specialist Evaluator is to determine if course materials offered by a distance study school are complete, accurate, and up-to-date in light of the stated objectives of the course. In other words, is the course of good quality, and does it meet the published standards of the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council?

After a school has applied for accreditation or when an accredited school has come up for a five year re-accreditation examination, two copies of each of the school's courses for new applicants

(continued)

or one copy for re-accreditation applicants are sent to the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council. When a school revises a course or develops a new program, a subject specialist review is conducted.

Prior to the on-site visit of the school, copies of each of the courses are sent to subject specialists for their evaluation on the educational quality of the courses. Subject specialists are carefully selected men and women whose education, experience, recognition, and willingness qualify them for the role of an evaluator of a school's course material.

After a subject specialist receives the course or courses, he/she conducts his/her evaluation using the Accrediting Commission's rating form, "Examiner's Rating Form." Subject specialists are encouraged to attach additional sheets of comments on the course, always with the view toward how course material can be improved to meet the published standards for accredited schools. The comments—particularly those used to justify a "B" or "C" ratings—are very important. These comments are used in Commission reports and deliberations—the more specific and concrete the comments, the more useful they are.

The subject specialist completes his/her review within the time frame specified by the Accrediting Commission and returns his/her rating form, accompanying comments, and a copy of a Professional Qualifications Form (similar to a resume) to the Commission. He/she is permitted to retain the course materials. **The identity of all subject specialists is held in confidence.**

In some cases a subject specialist is asked to accompany an Examining Committee to the school. If he/she accompanies a Committee, he/she is able to follow-up on questions related to the course materials by examining the school's procedures for offering its educational programs.

The Commission carefully considers each report on each course as a part of the overall determination on whether or not a school is to be accredited or re-accredited. Appropriate comments from subject specialist reports are incorporated into the visiting Examining Committee Chair's Report. This comprehensive Chair's Report is, in turn, forwarded to the school for comment before Accrediting Commission action.

Steps in a Subject Specialist Evaluation

1. Qualified individual is contacted by an Accrediting Commission staff member and is asked to evaluate one or more distance study courses, either at home or at the school site. A due date for submission of the Subject Specialist Report is confirmed.
2. Subject specialist receives from the Accrediting Commission one copy of each course to be reviewed. Also received are the Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialist which includes the Accrediting Commission accreditation standards; a sample Subject Specialist Report; Professional Qualifications Form (if one is not already on file in the Commission's

(continued)

office); accompanying kits to the course; and applicable promotional and advertising literature. The course is packaged the way students are to receive it.

3. Subject specialist evaluates course(s) in light of published standards and fills in one rating form for each course reviewed. Supplemental comments are attached to the rating form. In particular, "B" or "C" ratings merit a comment of justification.

4. Subject specialist forwards to the Accrediting Commission the Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists and the Professional Qualifications Form (if applicable). The report should be mailed by the date requested. The course materials are retained by the subject specialist.

5. The subject specialist may be asked to accompany the Examining Committee to the school and report his/her findings directly to the Chair of the Examining Committee upon completion of the school visit.

Checklist for the Subject Specialist

As a subject specialist evaluator of distance study courses, you will want to be sure that you have all of the items below before proceeding with your course evaluation. For each course to be evaluated, you should have:

_____ The course, including texts, study guides, examinations, any kits, and other components that may be listed as a part of the course.

_____ Accompanying materials to the course, such as advertising and promotional literature, sample student contract, catalog, and statements of the course objectives. These items are critical to the comprehensive evaluation of a distance education course.

_____ A copy of the Accrediting Commission's accreditation standards and a copy of the Examiner's Rating Form, for each course reviewed. Copies of these documents are included with the course material. Additional documents are available upon request. A sample Subject Specialist Report is also provided.

_____ A copy of the resume form (Professional Qualifications of Accrediting Commission Examiner) if one is not already on file. This form may be accompanied by a longer resume and a photograph.

In cases where you believe that one or more items may be missing, please call Sue Reilly at the Accrediting Commission offices and advise her. **Keep in mind that in certain cases, i.e., the introduction of a new course by an accredited school, the Accrediting Commission permits**

(continued)

the school to forward only 50 percent of the lesson materials plus a course outline. Thus, it may be necessary for you to record a "Not Applicable" or "Did Not Review" rating to one or more rating areas. Obviously, these special reviews will not include every item that will be in a "final" version of the course.

Do's for Subject Specialist Evaluators

1. **DO** submit your report on time.
2. **DO** fill out the Examiner's Rating Form for Subject Specialists completely.
3. **DO** attach constructive comments to your rating form.
4. **DO** evaluate the course in terms of the Accrediting Commission's standards.
5. **DO** enclose the resume form when you submit your report.

A Special Message to Evaluators of the Confidentiality of DETC Accreditation

As an evaluator appointed to visit an applicant for accreditation, you have formally agreed to undertake a serious and sensitive task, that of examining and objectively evaluating a distance study institution. It is a trust requiring both diplomacy and common sense.

As an evaluator, your obligations to the Accrediting Commission and to the applicant institution are freely taken. The cornerstone of the entire accreditation process is volunteerism. The process flourishes when there is trust between the applicant, the Commission, and you.

This "triangle of trust" is held together when *confidentiality* is observed. Not only must information, your findings, and committee perceptions be treated in a confidential way, the applicant must have absolute faith that confidentiality is never compromised.

Here is a list of reminders on confidentiality, a list of confidentiality do's and don'ts, that will help you ensure that the accrediting process continues to be a vital force in distance education.

- Avoid discussing with your colleagues the name of the school you are visiting, the city where you are going, or why. Your superiors should appreciate this and should understand that you will be on an official accreditation visit. You can leave the Accrediting Commissions's number, (202) 234-5100, for emergencies *only.*

- Do not display in your office or leave in an unsecured area, school documents or Self-Evaluation Reports.

- Do not give school documents of any kind to your superiors or subordinates for any reason. Financial statements in particular should never be shown to anyone else.

- Refrain from seeking the counsel of your colleagues concerning a particular problem of an applicant school you have examined. *Never* discuss with anyone any findings, observations, or feelings you or the Examining Committee have about an accreditation evaluation.

- Destroy all reports, data, and materials on the school and the evaluation when you have submitted your report and have been notified by the Commission that your report has been received. Never keep school self-evaluation materials around for reference. Be sure computer disks or computer files which have texts of your reports are erased or destroyed.

- Do not discuss on the telephone your role or your activities as a Commission evaluator with persons who identify themselves as "investigators." You have no way to verify who they really are. They may be a competitor! Refer such people to the Accrediting Commission staff in Washington, D.C.

The *confidentiality* of the accrediting process depends on you. Treat accrediting information and documents with the same confidentiality you would like to have other evaluators handle your school's materials.

January 1995

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

Questionnaire for On-Site Examiners

As a recent member of an Accrediting Commission Examining Committee, we ask that you **help** the Accrediting Commission once more by answering the following questions. Please complete this form (use additional sheet(s) if needed) and **return it to Sue Reilly at the DETC office:**

Question	Response
1. Did the standards you evaluated do an adequate job of showing whether the institution observed good business practices and sound academics?	1.
2. Should we have additional or different standards? Please describe.	2.
3. How could the institution have better prepared their SER? What did you like or dislike about their SER?	3.
4. In your review of the SER, did you have any questions about the institution that were not addressed by the SER questions?	4.
5. You participated in a process that included working alone and with your Committee, before, during and after a recent Accrediting Commission visit. Could the current process be improved by changing the alone/group division, and which would help you the most?	5.
6. Was the visit comprehensive and long enough to measure this institution against the standards?	6.
7. Did your Committee encounter any standards or policies that they had difficulty in interpreting and applying to this institution?	7.
8. What other comments would you like to offer the Commission about your experience on this visit and the accreditation process?	8.

Name:_____ Institute Visited:_____ Date of Visit:_____

January 1997

Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

Guidelines for the On-Site Visit

These Guideline are to help applicant institutions prepare for and conduct the on-site visit of the institution by the Examining Committee for the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council. By this point, you should have already completed the first three steps of the "Accreditation Process," and you should have read pages 17 through 34 in the *DETC Accreditation Handbook.*

When planning for the on-site visit, a mutually convenient date is coordinated by the Commission staff and with institution. The Commission staff then selects the members of the examining committee an prepares an Examination Schedule. The Examination Schedule lists the names, addresses and biographies of the examiners and observers, the date of the examination, the name and address of the hotel where the Committee will be staying, the time of the Committee's breakfast meeting, and the approximate time when the Committee will be arriving at the institution. The Examination Schedule is sent to the institution along with a statement for visitation fees required (see Appendix I. 1 of the Handbook). These fees must be paid by the date shown on the statement before for the visit can take place.

The **purpose** of the on-site visit is for the Examining Committee to verify the information in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and to gather any additional facts for the Accrediting Commission.

Before the Visit

- Plan to have key personnel of the institution present and available to be interviewed by members of the Examining Committee throughout the day of the on-site visit. All chief executives, operating officers, managers, outside accountants, faculty, and others should also be available and briefed on what will be happening on the day of the visit. It is **very important** to have a sufficiently representative number of faculty who provide academic counseling/services present during the visit. Prepare name badges for all school personnel to wear on the day of the visit.

- Arrange to have a private meeting room or conference area for the Examining Committee to use during the on-site visit. One complete set of each course, including tools, kits, equipment, advertising materials, and examinations, should be on display in the meeting room. A complete copy of the institution's Self-Evaluation Report should also be in the room.

- Order sandwiches and/or salads and soft drinks for the Committee's working lunch for the day of the visit. An estimation of how much food and refreshments to order for the Committee can be made from the Examination Schedule sent to the institution.

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Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009-2529

During the Visit

- Greet the Committee members when they arrive immediately show them to the private meeting room so that they can leave their coats and/or briefcases. The CEO/President should make brief introductions of key staff members to the Committee, and the Chair of the Committee will introduce the examiners (who will all be wearing name badges prepared by DETC's staff). The CEO/President should give a brief statement (no longer than 10 minutes) about the institution's philosophy and purpose, describe the institution's organization and types of programs offered, and give an overview of the layout and locations of the facilities.

- Give a brief tour of the facilities. The tour should take no more than 20 minutes and end back at the meeting room. The examiners will note where key officials or staff are located so that they can interview them later. The Committee members are trained to **not** ask questions during the tour. It is helpful to have extra copies of the office layout (including names) which were supplied in the institution's SER available for the Committee members.

- After the tour, the Committee will meet briefly in the meeting room and then divide up to work in their own areas of expertise. Each examiner has his or her own duties to perform. Most interviews will are conducted on a one-on-one basis. However, in large institutions, an examiner may on occasion interview small groups.

- During the visit, the Committee members work from documents, take notes, examine files, review records, verify data and assemble relevant information to aid in preparing their reports. School personnel should be properly briefed and be able and willing to answer appropriate questions from the Committee members. Staff should also cooperate when asked for additional reports or documentation.

- Lunch should be ready and delivered to the meeting room at about noon. The Committee will return to the meeting room for an executive session as they work through lunch. The lunch usually lasts around 30 to 45 minutes, and then the examiners continue their interviews. School personnel should also be finished with their lunches and ready to answer questions at the same time the Committee is finished.

- The Committee usually estimates at lunch time how much longer they will need to complete their examination, and a time is set to meet back at the meeting room. When the Committee is ready to leave, the Chair meets briefly with the CEO/President. At this time the Chair will ask for any additional information which the Committee may need for their reports and informs the CEO of an approximate date when he or she may expect to receive a copy of the Chair's Report. The Chair thanks the CEO for the cooperation and hospitality received. Because judgment regarding accreditation rests solely with the Accrediting Commission, neither the Chair or any member of the Committee is authorized to say anything them implies acceptance or rejection of the institution by the Commission.

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After the Visit

- After the visit the school will receive an acknowledgment letter from the Commission thanking them for their hospitality and inviting them to make comments prior to the receipt of the Chair's Report. As soon as the Commission staff receives a copy of the Chair's Report it is forwarded to the institution's CEO/ President for comment. The CEO/President is given 14 days to respond to the comments and statements in the Chair's Report. The institution is also given an opportunity to make an oral presentation to the Accrediting Commission at the Commission meeting at which the institution is considered. The oral presentation must be based on the Chair's Report and the written materials which the institution submitted.

- After the Accrediting Commission meets (normally in January or June), the institution will receive a letter setting forth the Commission's decision (see Appendix H. 1 in the Handbook). The institution may appeal or request reconsideration of the Commission decision (see Appendix G. 5 in the Handbook). If the institution is denied accreditation or if accreditation is withdrawn, the institution must wait one year from the date of the Commission's decision before making application for accreditation again.

- Also, after the Commission meeting, the institution will receive copies of any Subject Specialists' reports (minus the names of the outside reviewers) and student surveys received.

All accrediting decisions of the Accrediting Commission are final. They are not subject to review or veto by the DETC members, officers, or Board of Trustees.

If you have any additional questions or need assistance as you prepare for your on-site visit, please feel free to call the Commission's staff at 202-234-5100.

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Checklist for the On-Site Visit

Before Visit

___ Pay visitation fees.

___ Contact key personnel and ask them to be present and available on the day of the visit.

___ Brief key personnel on what will happen on the day of the visit.

___ Have CEO/President prepare a 10 minute briefing on the institution's philosophy and purpose, describe the institution's organization and types of programs offered, and an overview of the layout and locations of the facilities.

___ Prepare name badges for school personnel.

___ Make arrangements for a private meeting room for the Committee to use while at the school.

___ Have on display in the meeting room one complete set of each course, including tools, kits, equipment, advertising materials and examinations.

___ Have a complete copy of the school's Self-Evaluation Report in the meeting room.

___ Prepare extra copies of the organization chart and the office layout (including names) supplied in the SER and put in meeting room. Have a list of key interoffice telephone numbers in the Committee meeting room.

___ Order appropriate sandwiches and/or salads and soft drinks to be delivered on the day of the visit.

During Visit

___ Make certain school personnel are wearing name badges.

___ Greet Committee members and show them to the prearranged meeting room.

___ Do introductions.

___ Have CEO/President give 10 minute brief on institution.

___ Give tour of institution.

___ Have school personnel present and available for interviews by Committee members.

___ Have lunch delivered and ready in the meeting room by noon.

___ Assure that school personnel finish their lunches by 12:30 - 12:45 p.m. and are available for interviews.

___ Have CEO/President available for short meeting with Chair at the end of the visit.

___ Supply any additional information requested by Committee members and get an approximate date to receive a copy of the Chair's Report.

___ Say good-bye to the examiners.

After Visit

___ Comment on visit prior to receipt of Chair's Report.

___ Receive Chair's Report and prepare and send response to Commission by date requested.

___ Let Commission know if a oral presentation will be made at the Commission meeting.

___ Receive letter on Commission decision.

___ Receive copies of the subject specialist reports and student surveys.

K. Glossary

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ABILITY TO BENEFIT:

A phrase describing the means by which a student is judged to have the ability to successfully complete a course of postsecondary training. A student may use "ability to benefit" in lieu of having a high school diploma or its equivalent to satisfy the requirement to participate in federal student aid programs.

ACCREDITATION:

The process whereby an organization or agency recognizes an institution, college, school, or program of study as having voluntarily met established qualifications or standards as determined through initial and periodic evaluations.

ACTIVE STUDENT:

An enrolled student who has submitted at least one examination to a school for servicing during the school's designated period of time established as the criteria for making satisfactory progress, or one who has affirmed in writing his/her intent to continue studying.

ASSIGNMENT:

A part of organized study material to be studied and/or performed by the student, according to required techniques and principles; a specific task to be performed by the student and submitted to the school for evaluation and comment.

BUSINESS STANDARDS:

DETC Accrediting Commission standards applicable to the business practices and policies of a school referring to such areas as ethical practice in advertising and promotion, sales, tuition cancellation, and settlement policies.

CANCELLATION:

The process of disenrolling a student, reducing the student's financial obligation in accordance with the school's policy, and relieving the school of further service obligation to the student.

CERTIFICATE:

(1) A document issued by a school as evidence that a student has successfully completed a prescribed course or program or portion thereof; (2) A legal document issued by a State authorizing a school to perform certain specific services in the field of education.

COMBINATION COURSE:

A course consisting of a distance study portion (more than 51%) and a residence portion. Normally, the distance study portion precedes the residence period. Residence training is offered to provide students instruction on the use of specialized equipment, learning of manual skills, or the application of certain techniques under supervision.

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COMPLETION RATE:

The ratio of assignments completed to the total number of assignments contracted for in a fixed sample of students (note: *not* the same as graduation rate).

DEGREE:

An authorized recognition conferred by an approved educational institution acknowledging the satisfactory completion of a course of study or program.

DIPLOMA:

A document given by an educational institution certifying the completion of a course of study.

DISTANCE EDUCATION (CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION, DISTANCE STUDY):

Education designed for students who live at a distance from the teaching institution. Ordinarily, printed and/or recorded materials are sent by mail, providing the student with structured units of information, assigned exercises for practice, and examinations to measure achievement. These, in turn, are submitted to the teaching institution for evaluation and comment and subsequent return to the student.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS:

Records and files maintained by a school for each student's educational activity, which include the student's name, address, basic education, date of enrollment, course, grades, current academic achievement, enrollment agreements, and other relevant information.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS:

DETC Accrediting Commission Standards applicable to the educational program of a school, referring to the level of learning expected from such areas as educational materials, educational services, student services, qualifications of the faculty, and research.

ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT (APPLICATION, CONTRACT):

A form containing the specific obligations of the school and the student. Enrollment applications may or may not become valid contracts before they are accepted by the school at its main office.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS:

The process whereby a person becomes enrolled as a student in a home study course, generally consisting of the following steps:

(1) Application for enrollment: Submission by a person of an enrollment application (or contract) to a school, requesting enrollment in a course.

(continued)

(2) Registration and Acceptance: The review and approval by a school of an enrollment/application agreement, in which the school agrees to accept the applicant as an enrollee/student and registers the applicant. Registration is conditional to applicable affirmation and cooling-off provisions.

(3) Affirmation: In some instances students must affirm their enrollment by notifying a school of their intent to pursue a course. In these cases, students are usually required to wait a designated period of time after submitting their enrollment application before they may affirm their enrollment. Students failing to affirm are canceled from the course.

(4) Cooling-Off: Most states have laws which provide students periods ranging from 3 to 15 days in which they may reconsider their application for enrollment. Students electing not to proceed with a course notify the school of their decision and are thus not considered as having enrolled in the course.

(5) Matriculation: A formal process in which a student has applied for enrollment in a course, has been accepted for enrollment by a school, has been registered as a student, and has formally submitted as least one required examination or lesson for servicing to the school.

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

A committee appointed by the DETC Accrediting Commission for the purpose of visiting a school to gather data about the school's operation, such as its educational program and its business practices. Using these and other data the Accrediting Commission decides whether or not the school meets the published standards for accredited schools.

FACULTY:

Those people who present instruction, prepare instructional material, evaluate assignments, and counsel students in academic selection and progress. Faculty are assumed to have full responsibility for an academic program and student progress.

FIELD STAFF (SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SALES AGENTS):

The personnel who contact prospective students for the purpose of enrolling them in a distance study course, plus the district sales managers, regional sales managers, and other salespeople.

GRADUATE:

A person who has satisfied the prescribed requirements (e.g., assignments or examinations of an educational course or program) and has been awarded a certificate, diploma, or degree affirming this.

GRADUATION RATE:

Percentage of students in a fixed sample of a school's course or courses who have satisfactorily completed all of the prescribed requirements of a given course or program.

(continued)

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Texts, tapes, work kits, equipment, supplies, tools, and other materials used in a course to accommodate students and facilitate the training.

KIT:

A collection of predominantly non-textual materials included in a distance study course to augment or enhance instruction. These materials may consist of tools, equipment, instruments, audio-visual aids, components, accessories, and so forth.

NON-START RATE:

Percentage of enrolled and registered students in a fixed sample of a school's course or courses who did not submit any required examination or lesson assignment for grading or servicing. Non-starts: students who are disenrolled in a course after registration, after the applicable cooling-off period, but prior to matriculation.

OBJECTIVE, EDUCATIONAL:

A statement of what an education program can do for reasonably diligent students. For distance study courses, objectives are goals or aims attainable through the correspondence study method and provide a description of skills to be acquired, information to be learned, training to be received, and attitudes and habits to be developed.

OUTCOMES:

The results of instruction, such as employment, increased earnings, measurable gains in occupational competency; or increased knowledge, skill, dexterity; or appreciation or improved attitude.

READING LEVEL:

The level of a person's reading comprehension as assessed by a standardized test or that equivalent level at which a program of study is written.

REGISTRATION (REGISTERED STUDENT):

A person who has made formal application for enrollment with a school, has been found to meet stated admissions and enrollment criteria or their equivalent, and has been accepted by the school for a designated course or program. (See also *Enrollment Process*)

REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION:

Special instruction designed and delivered to alleviate deficiencies in basic skills (usually verbal and computational) needed to complete a course.

(continued)

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (SER):

A report prepared by a school after a careful study of its operations. The Accrediting Commission of the DETC outlines the major aspects of this self-study in the "Guide to Self-Evaluation Report." This report reveals the philosophy, organization, specific practices and procedures, the success of different operations, the degree to which the school is accomplishing its stated objectives, and the degree in which it meets accrediting standards.

SELF-STUDY COURSE:

A series of texts and other materials designed for individualized study. Examination and evaluation services are not offered by the publisher or school providing the course.

STUDENT SERVICES:

Supplemental activities and resources provided for a student or group of students by an educational institution. These services are designed to assist the student to perform to his potential, motivate a student to study, or respond to student questions of a non-academic nature.

STUDENT GUIDE (TRAINING GUIDE; INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE):

A written supplement to course materials designed to facilitate learning. It may include directions on how-to-study, suggested readings, research topics, self-check tests, problems, and study projects, all of which are keyed to the basic course texts.

SUBJECT SPECIALIST EVALUATOR (SUBJECT MATTER SPECIALIST):

A person whose background, education, training, experience, occupation, and/or profession qualifies him as a reliable authority or expert on a given subject, and who is appointed by the Accrediting Commission of the DETC to evaluate distance study courses in terms of the published standards for accredited schools.

TEACH-OUT

The formal, planned process whereby an educational institution: (1) ceases enrolling any new students and (2) conducts, or arranges for, an orderly conduct of instruction for all active students. In a "teach-out mode," students receive all the services, materials, tutoring, etc., for which they had contracted. At the conclusion of a teach-out, the institution normally ceases all operations.

TERMINAL DEGREE:

The highest academic degree in a given subject matter area or teaching discipline available to individuals who desire to instruct courses and teach in the subject. Normally a doctoral-level degree, specialized fields may only have a master's degree available in certain disciplines [added 1/97].

(continued)

TRANSCRIPT:

An official copy of a student's educational record at an educational institution; it usually lists all courses taken, final grades received, and credits (and honors) earned.

TUITION:

The total price for a course of instruction includes all fees and separately itemized charges comprising the overall charge for a course of instruction, including fees and charges for the following:

(a) Application, registration and matriculation fees and the down payment (under the Accrediting Commission's minimum refund policy, the application, registration and matriculation fees must be deducted before the tuition refund percentage calculation is made);

(b) Texts, study guides, workbooks, and required reference materials;

(c) Kits, tools, supplies, equipment, and audio visual devices and programs which are included as a regular part of a course or such items required to be purchased from the school;

(d) The lease or rental of required equipment, tools, or other devices;

(e) Instruction and educational service;

(f) Placement and other services offered as a regular part of a course;

(g) Required resident training;

(h) Earned finance charges;

(i) Optional resident training and sessions offered as a regular part of a course; and

(j) Required proctored examinations.

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